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THE

MOST REMARKABLE

TYPES, FIGURES,

AND

ALLEGORIES

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT.

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THE PREFACE.

THE reader is desired to take notice that the grand doctrines of christianity, concerning the mediation of Christ, and the inestimable blessings of his purchase, were typically manifested to the church, by a variety of ceremonies, persons, and events, under the Old-Testament dispensation.

The following treatise is intended for the edification of those who have obtained precious faith. Such persons it will not be difficult to persuade, that the law exhibited the shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ.*

In order to settle the proper limits of allegorical interpretation, two things must be observed, First, To make a proper divine allegory, type, or figure, it is necessarily required that there be a resemblance, less or more, betwixt the literal history, person, or thing, and the spiritual doctrine, truth, or mystery, which is supposed to be represented. Secondly, There must be some good reason to think that this resemblance is not merely casual, or the child of fancy, but actually intended by the Holy Ghost.

In this age of disputes, it must doubtless be a considerable recommendation of a performance, when the reader is informed, that while the author discovers the most zealous attachment to the cause

* Col. ii. 17. See Theron and Aspasia, Dialogue 3.

of truth, and appears a devoted champion of the evangelical doctrines, he is careful not to lay a disproportionate stress upon any thing by which one Christian may be distinguished from another. Professing christians agreeing in laying Jesus Christ the one and only foundation of present holiness and future happiness, are not here taught or stirred up to bite and devour one another. No oil is here administered to increase the flame, or keep awake the conflagration of animosity and dispute, which have so long and so sadly disturbed the peace, and hindered the union of the professed friends of the truth as it is in Jesus; nor are any problematical questions here determined with authoritative airs, that may be a new bone of contention in the church.

The conciseness, the propriety, the energy, with which the several important and interesting subjects here taken into consideration are treated, will, it is presumed, both entertain and edify the intelligent reader; delight his taste; inform his judgment; improve his heart; and direct his practice.

May the God of all grace follow the piece with his special blessing, give it an extensive spread, and make it subservient to the glorious cause of evangelical truth, real holiness, and christian charity.

THE PUBLISHERS.

TYPES, FIGURES, ALLEGORIES, &c.

PART FIRST.

TYPICAL PERSONS.

1. CHRIST and ADAM compared.

THE almighty Creator had now finished the universal frame of nature. He saw the heavens shining in all their glory; he beheld the earth smiling in all her beauty: the sea was stocked with fish; the air with fowls; the field with beasts. But still the masterpiece of this inferior world was wanting, a creature endued with reason; of upright stature; and qualified at once to rule over the rest of the creation, and correspond with his Creator. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul.* Thus far we are told by the Hebrew lawgiver. And we are further informed by the great apostle of the Gentiles, that this first man, whose name was Adam, was the type or figure of him that was to come.† For ought we know, it might not so much as enter the heart of Adam to conceive of this divine mystery; and Moses himself, the inspired penman of that truly ancient

* Gen. ii. 7. † Rom. v. 14.

and authentic history, might not perhaps advert to it. But since God has revealed it to us by his Spirit, let us attend where the resemblance lies, of the first to the second Adam; which we shall obviously find, whether we view him as the first man, the first father, the first lord, the first husband, or the first covenant-head. And let us learn to contemplate the glory of that illustrious person, who was so early typified; while we admire the depth of God's foreknowledge, in ordering matters so, that the history of the first man, who was of the earth, and earthly, was a prophecy of the second man, who is the Lord from heaven.

To begin with the creation of our general ancestor. Adam was the first man in the world of nature, who being formed out of the dust of the ground, by the immediate hand of his Creator, was without father, and without mother, and in a sense peculiar to himself, is called the Son of God*. He was also a creature perfectly new, to whom there was nothing like, and nothing equal, among all the visible works of God; for his person, consisting of a visible body, and an invisible soul, was made after the image, and in the likeness of God, which chiefly consist in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Now, sure it is not difficult to perceive, that all these characters exactly agree to the second man, who is the first-born among many brethren, in the world of

* Luke iii. 38.

grace,—without father as man,—without mother as God. His body was formed (not indeed of the dust of the ground, but in a manner equally unexampled and miraculous) of the virgin's substance, by the immediate power of God; and so soon as a reasonable soul was united to it, in the womb of the virgin, both were, that very moment, assumed into the divine person of the Son; wherefore, in all propriety, that holy thing which was born of her, was called the Son of God;* or, to use the expression of an Old Testament prophet, was a new thing created in the earth.† In the man Christ Jesus is found more of the divine likeness than all the saints, than all the holy angels can dare to boast. For which of them have been called at any time, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person? or to which of them has he said, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? ‡ Adam, indeed, might resemble his Creator, as the image on the coin resembles the king upon the throne; but Jesus Christ resembles God, as the prince and heir to the crown resembles his royal father, being not only like him, but of the same nature and substance with him. And though in shadowing forth the constitution of Immanuel's person, all similitudes must be infinitely defective, yet the union of Adam's soul and body is perhaps the best natural emblem of it we can expect to find. Nor does it seem unlawful for us to assist our conception of this

* Luke i. 35. † Jer. xxxi. 22. ‡ Heb. i. 3. 5.

high mystery by this natural union, inasmuch as the Holy Ghost himself, in the scriptures of the New Testament, seems to allude unto it, when he calls his humanity the flesh, and his divinity the spirit. In the former he was manifested, in the latter he was justified.* In the one he was put to death, and in the other he was quickened.† If the constitution of the first Adam's person was an incomprehensible mystery in nature, the constitution of the second Adam's person is no less an incomprehensible mystery of grace.

As Adam was the first man that God created, so he was the first father and progenitor of all other men, who are every one born in his image as they come into the world of nature, and breathe the vital air. Just so, from Jesus Christ the everlasting Father, all who come into the world of grace derive their spiritual being; his image they bear,‡ and from him the whole family in heaven and in earth is named.‖ Though here also there is a considerable disparity betwixt the earthly man, and the heavenly Adam. The first man is not the immediate, but the remote father of our flesh; for one generation goes, and another comes: but Jesus Christ is the immediate father of all his saints who in every age receive from him the light of life, as the silver moon, and all the sparkling stars, receive their light immediately from the sun the glorious

* 1 Timothy iii. 16. † 1 Peter iii. 18.
‡ 1 Cor, xv. 49. ‖ Eph. iii. 15.

fountain of the day. The first Adam, as Moses relates, was made a living soul,* that he might convey a natural life to them who had not received it: but the second Adam, as the apostle declares, was made a quickening spirit, to impart a spiritual life to them who having now lost it, were dead in trespasses and in sins; and at the resurrection of the just to quicken also their mortal bodies. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Once more; Adam was the first lord and king of the world. Being made a little lower than the angels he was crowned with glory and honour. He had dominion over the works of God's hands; and all things were put under his feet: all sheep and oxen, the beasts of the field, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.† But alas! the dominion of this lord of the inferior creation was short-lived; for being in honour, he continued not.‡ Nevertheless, in the person of Jesus Christ, God-man, the primeval sovereignty of the human nature is most amply restored; for he is made head over all things unto his body the church, both in the heights and depths.‖ The jurisdiction of Adam, though wide, was not universal; but the kingdom of Jesus Christ ruleth over all. He can, if he pleases, extinguish the stars and the sun, which shine by his permission; and of his government and peace there shall be no end.§

* 1 Cor. xv. 45. † Ps. viii. 3. 4. 5. ‡ Ps. xlix. 12. ‖ Eph. i. 22. § Isaiah ix. 7.

Now let us come to the marriage of our great progenitor. God saw it was not good for man to be alone:* he casts him into a deep sleep; opens his side; takes from him a rib; by his creative power forms a woman of it; closes the wound; presents the newly-formed creature to her husband, who being awaked, knew what was done unto him, and with wonder acknowledged this last and best gift of heaven, to be bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. For this cause, says the sacred historian, shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife.† Now, may we be allowed to allegorize this history? Does not the apostle seem to say, that this is spoken of Christ and the church?‡ Let us modestly pursue the allegory a little. The second Adam, that he might give life and being to his beloved spouse, the church, the mother of all who are truly living, was content to sleep the sleep of death. This sleep of death was not the effect of nature, for he died not of old age nor sickness; but he was voluntarily cast into it, and was delivered, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, to be crucified and slain. His side was opened with a spear, and from the gaping wound came water and blood, that he might sanctify and cleanse, and present to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.‖ By this sleep of death into which he was cast, he becomes at once

* Gen. ii. 18. † Ver. 24. ‡ Eph. v. 32. ‖ Ver. 27.

her husband and her father; for she is a part of himself, of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* When he awaked at his resurrection, his wounds were healed; he found himself a glorious conqueror; he saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. He acknowledges the relation, and betrothes her to himself for ever in loving-kindness, in mercies, and in faithfulness. A bloody spouse was the church to thee, O dying Redeemer! So matchless was his love, he left his father and his mother to cleave to his unworthy bride—left his father in heaven, when he came down into this lower world, and consented to be forsaken for a season—left his mother on earth, when he ascended on high as the captain of salvation. He left the blessed virgin that bare him, to provide for himself; he left the church of the Jews, although his mother-church, that he might cleave unto the Gentile church, gathered out of all nations.

Lastly, Adam was the first covenant-head, and public representative. It is true, the hints of this transaction are but sparingly given in the book of Genesis. However, the truth of it is clearly evinced from the tenor of divine revelation; and it is evident, that before the law was given by Moses, a law was given to Adam, because death reigned from Adam to Moses, and there behoved to be a law by which this death did reign. For, as the in-

* Eph. v. 39.

spired apostle argues with the greatest force of reason. Sin is not imputed where there is no law.* Was there then a law before the covenant of Sinai? It was surely none other but the law of works, which God gave to the first man; in whom, as their covenant-head, his posterity were either to stand or fall. Full well we know the doleful event. But as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.† The first Adam through pride disobeyed the most easy precept; and the last Adam obeyed the most difficult commandment. The first Adam, being a man, affected to be as God: the second Adam, being God, was found in fashion as a man. The first Adam was assaulted by the devil in paradise, and was overcome: the second Adam was tempted in the wilderness, by the same malicious spirit, but he was a conqueror. The first Adam breaking the law in one point, was guilty of all: the last Adam observing it in every point, did magnify and make it honourable. The moment we become the children of Adam by natural generation we die for a sin which we could not personally commit: the moment we become the children of Christ by regeneration, we are made alive, by a righteousness which we could not actually work out. In Adam we are condemned for our sin; but in Christ we are justified from innumerable offences. In the first book of the Bible we have a melancholy

* Rom. v. 13. † Ver. 19.

relation, how the first Adam was so far from being able to transmit life and happiness to his posterity, or to give them to eat of the tree of life, that himself was driven out from the terrestrial paradise, and debarred from all access to that sacramental tree: But in the last book of the sacred oracles, we are presented with a view of the second Adam, in a far more glorious place than that happy garden, and hear him declaring from his own mouth, To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

For ever blessed be the glorious name of God, that what the first Adam could not keep, the second hath amply restored to us: For as in Adam sin hath reigned unto death; so grace hath reigned through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord:† Who is not only come that we might have life, but that we might have it more abundantly.‡

2. THE HISTORY OF NOAH.

THAT Noah was a figure of Jesus Christ, seems not obscurely hinted in his very name given him by his religious father, not without prophetic instinct. It signifies rest, comfort, and, as some have observed, grace, when its letters are a little transposed. So Christ is our consolation, our rest, and by him grace reigns unto eternal life. Of him we may truly say with the strictest propriety,

* Rev. ii. 7. † Rom. v. 21. ‡ John x. 10.

This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands.* Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and walked with God,† when the wickedness of men was grown to the most exorbitant height, and all flesh had corrupted their way. He dared to be good, when all were turned degenerate; and, fearless of reproach or violence, he admonished them of their wicked ways, preaching righteousness in their assemblies.‡ So Christ preserved his integrity in every the smallest instance, in an evil and adulterous generation, preaching what he practised, with not unlike success to Noah. For it is written of him in the Psalms, I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: Lo, I have not refrained my lips O Lord thou knowest.§ In some seasons of the Almighty's vengeance, we are informed, that the righteousness of Noah, Daniel, and Job, could not deliver a sinning people, nor yet their nearest relations, from the lifted stroke.‖ Truly Noah, though righteous, could not by his righteousness avert the waters of the flood. But the righteousness of our adorable Redeemer is of such infinite value and perfection, as to deliver from death an innumerable multitude of transgressors.

But let us chiefly consider that memorable history of Noah, his preparing an ark for the saving of his house; the antitype of which remarkable event, we

* Gen. v. 29 † Chap. vi. 6. ‡ 2 Pet. ii. 5. § Psal. xl. 9. ‖ Ezek. xiv. 4.

are informed by the apostle Peter, is, our being saved by baptism (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*— The long-suffering of God was now tired out, and his Spirit ceased to strive with rebellious men, whom all means had proved ineffectual to reclaim. The time was come, when the threatened vengeance was to descend with resistless fury. Noah being long before warned of God, had prepared an ark against the approaching deluge: For he believed God; and being moved with fear, he obeyed the commandment of the Lord. He despised the jeers of the unbelieving world; and considered not the huge difficulties he behoved to surmount, before he could get a vessel constructed, of such bulk as would contain in its capacious hold, all sorts of beasts and birds, together with their necessary provisions, for so long a time as he was to be there a prisoner. That God who commanded him, that God in whom he believed, and whom he feared, enabled him also both to begin and finish. The ship is built; the cargo is taken in; the flood comes; and the waters prevail above the tallest trees, and loftiest mountains. The sinful race of men is buried in a watry grave. But the ark, the peculiar care of Heaven, though without helm or mast, rides triumphant over the foaming billow; is preserved from dashing on the craggy rocks, or

* 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22.

foundering in the mighty waters. At length a dove, fetching in her mouth an olive-leaf,* informs the inhabitants of the ark, that the waters were abated. They are at last released from their tedious confinement. The venerable patriarch, overwhelmed with gratitude for such a wonderful preservation amidst the howling waste, sacrifices unto the Lord, who smells a savour of rest,† and renews with him his gracious covenant, that he will no more curse the ground for man's sake. A glorious rainbow is seen over his head stamping the clouds,‡ which from that time became a peaceful sign, that the waters shall never more cover the face of the earth; and that though the waves should toss themselves against the sandy shores, they shall never prevail.—Who sees not in this whole transaction, a lively picture of the method of our salvation by Jesus Christ, from a far more dreadful flood, that shall, sooner or later, descend upon the head of every sinner? In Jesus Christ we have the antitype of Noah, both floating in the ark, standing at the altar, and compassed with the rainbow. Indeed he is at once the ark that saves us from the floods of divine wrath, the sacrifice that atones the incensed justice of God, and the rainbow that makes our clouds of every sort to wear sweet smiles. Though Noah's ark, and sacrifice, and rainbow, were things different from himself, and from one another, in Jesus Christ they are all conjoined.

* Gen. viii. 11. † Ver. 21. ‡ Chap. ix. 13.

What mortal wit would have contrived such an expedient as the ark of Noah, to save from a universal deluge? There is no doubt but the whole scheme appeared very ridiculous to the generality of the world. Noah himself was not the contriver of this project. It was wholly planned by God.—Even so, if men and angels had tortured their invention to save a guilty world, they could never have so much as suggested that method which the wisdom of God has fallen upon in the mediation of Jesus Christ. So far does it transcend the thoughts of men, that naturally they cannot receive the mystery of God's will. For it is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.*——In this wonderful vessel were found only eight souls,† the little family of Noah; and how small was that number to the myriads that perished in the waves? Even so the flock of Christ is but a little flock; for though many are called, yet few are chosen.‡ O how unsearchable are his judgments!——It was no doubt very strange to see the wildest beasts and birds dwelling peaceably together under the same roof, in that time of common danger: But not more strange than what happens every time when sinners are converted unto God, and enter into his sanctuary. For in Jesus Christ, the men of ravenous natures forget their natural ferocity, and put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, humbleness of mind,

* 1 Cor. i. 23. † 1 Pet. iii. 20. ‡ Matt. xx. 16.

meekness, and long-suffering; and to use the lofty stile of the prophet, The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the young lion and the fatling together:—They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.* ——Dreadful, to be sure, were the buffetings of the rolling surges on the sides of the ark, when heaven and earth seemed to conspire its ruin; but being protected by a superior providence, the vessel, tho' heavy laden, weathered the storm, preserved alive all the creatures that were within her, and at last rested upon the mountains of Ararat. So did the waves and billows of the Father's wrath go over thine head, O suffering Saviour, and the floods of ungodly men made thee afraid:† But thou wast more than a conqueror, and at last did find thy rest on the mountains of eternal glory, having both saved thyself and all that are found in thee: Thou art our hiding-place from the storm, and a covert from the tempest. If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, the waters of God's wrath had swallowed us up quick: Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul; the proud waters had gone over our soul.‡——When we are told in the sacred history, that a dove alighted on the ark with the olive-leaf, what should hinder us to think of the holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, who alighted upon him in the waters of Jordan, in the likeness of that gentle bird? and who brings glad ti-

* Isa. xi. 6. † Psal. xviii. 4 ‡ Psal. cxxiv. 4.

dings of great joy to all the inhabitants of the ark, when he assures them, by the most incontestible proofs, that the winter of wrath is past, and the rain is over and gone.*—The holy fire is now gone forth at the appointed season; and beholding the dismal desolation, he offers an atoning sacrifice of every clean bird and beast; and the Lord smelled a savour of rest. This naturally leads us to think of him who gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour.† So well pleased is God with Jesus Christ, that with him he establishes his covenant, and with all his seed, that they shall never come into condemnation. Hear what himself declares by the mouth of the holy prophet Isaiah: This is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee, O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted.‡ See how the frowning clouds now smile with the glorious colours of the rainbow, the cheerful token of God's covenant. It is a bow, but it has no arrow; and the face of it is turned away from us in token of reconciliation. Such is the glorious transformation of all your afflictions by Jesus Christ, O ye heirs of righteousness. They are clouds indeed, dark clouds, but so far from drowning, they shall even fructify your soul, and make you revive as the corn. What before was an indi-

* Song ii. 11. † Eph. v. 2. ‡ Isa. liv. 9.

cation of wrath, and a cause of fear, is now a token of love, and an encouragement of faith. A rainbow forever encompasses the throne of your God,* tho' from it should proceed lightnings, and thunders, and voices. Though like that mighty angel in the Revelation,† he should be clothed with a cloud in the dispensations of his providence, his sunny face will produce a rainbow round about his head. He is ever mindful of his covenant, and you need not fear the terrors of his glory.

3. THE HISTORY OF MELCHIZEDEC.

NOW we shall came to the short, but comprehensive history of Melchizedec; the figurative meaning of which is not only hinted to us in the sacred oracles, but the Holy Ghost condescends to enter on a very particular explication of it.‡ The narrative related by Moses is shortly this.§ The patriarch Abram had, with his little army, surprised and defeated the forces of the confederate kings, who had plundered Sodom, and among other prisoners, had carried away captive his kinsman Lot, who, living in that wicked city, was now a very singular blessing to his sinful fellow-citizens, being the occasion of their rescue from the invaders of their country. As he returned from the slaughter, he was met by the king of Sodom, with another king of a very different character: His name was Melchizedec, which, though a very fine one, for it

* Rev. iv. 3. † Chap. x. 1. ‡ Heb. vii. § See Gen. xiv.

signifies king of righteousness, was not unsuitable to his real character, and is a proper admonition to all other kings for what they should be distinguished. The name of his city was Salem: Whether it was that Salem where Jehovah afterwards had his tabernacle, or another place of the same name, is not precisely determined. However, we are assured, that upon this occasion he brought forth bread and wine, not as a sacrifice to God, O ye Papists, but to refresh the patriarch's men, fatigued with toil. But the most extraordinary circumstance of all is, that though living in that wicked country, he was priest of the Most High God, and vested with regal dignity. When all around him were sunk in superstition and idolatry, this illustrious Gentile retained the knowledge of the true God, and thought it no disparagement of his kingly honour to officiate in the solemn rites of his holy worship. The hospitable monarch was a no less religious priest. As in the former capacity, he brought forth bread and wine; so in the latter, he blessed the renowned patriarch, and received from him tithes of all. Thus far the sacred story. But from what parents he descended, when he was born, or when he died, who were his predecessors, or who succeeded him, are questions we are not permitted to resolve. And even the silence of the scripture is expressive! "For he was made like unto the Son of God," both in what Moses relates concerning him, and in what he conceals from the curious inquirer. Let us care-

fully observe these two heads of resemblance, and we shall easily understand, how David in spirit says of the Messiah, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec.*

We shall first begin with what Moses relates of this extraordinary man.——To whom can his name Melchizedec so properly belong, as to the king that reigns in righteousness; who, righteous himself, has wrought for all his subjects a justifying righteousness by the merit of his blood, and works in all his subjects a sanctifying righteousness by the power of his Spirit?—He, he is King of Salem, which is by interpretation, King of peace. Peace is the disposition for which he was renowned, who with his dying breath implored forgiveness to his bloody murderers: peace is the grand blessing he died to purchase, and lives to confer. O glorious peace, of which righteousness is the foundation, and joy in the Holy Ghost the inseparable attendant! Hail ye subjects of his auspicious government, who call the blessings of his purchase all your own! Lo, in your princely Saviour, the great Jehovah lays aside his vindictive wrath, and becomes your loving Father; the angels no more stand aloof, but commence your ministers and guardians; the inferior creatures are turned into your faithful friends and allies; the Jews and Gentiles, forgetting their former enmity, join in the most cordial friendship; and conscience, no more an accuser, whispers peace in gentlest ac-

* Psal. cx. 4.

cents. Though "in the world you should have tribulation, yet in him you shall have peace." O Prince of peace, extend the borders of thy peaceful kingdom far and wide, and let the wished period come when the nations shall learn war no more! O let thy peace rule in our hearts through these tumultuous scenes of life; and bring us at last to these calm regions of joy and felicity, where peace extends her dove-like wings for ever and ever!—"He brought forth bread and wine," to refresh the hungry and thirsty soldiers, when returning from the slaughter of the kings. Such is the refreshment which the true Melchizedec affords, and will afford to all who are truly engaged in the spiritual warfare. He "has prepared of his goodness for the poor." O "come unto him, and you shall never hunger;——believe on him and you shall never thirst. Eat of his bread and drink of the wine which he has mingled." Happy they who shall conquer in the holy warfare, for they "shall eat of the hidden manna, and the Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them."——"And he was priest of the Most High God." An honor not usually appropriated to those who sit on thrones; for God himself was pleased to provide against the blending of these offices in the commonwealth of Israel. Witness thy fate, Uzziah,* who snatching at the censer, lost the scepter. And shall the tripple-crowned priest of Rome, who exalts himself above all that is

* 2 Chron. xxvi. 18.

called God, go always unpunished? But of Jesus Christ a prophet testifies, He shall sit and rule upon his throne,* as once he was a king upon his cross.—"And he blessed Abram." So Christ our royal priest, was sent of God to bless the children of Abram, not with a verbal, but real benediction, in turning every one of us from our iniquity: and "men shall be blessed in him."—"Consider," in the last place, "how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils;" and, as we may say, even Levi, who received tithes from the people by the commandment of God, was tithed in the loins of his progenitor.—A most convincing proof, that this Melchizedec was both a greater man than Abram, and a greater priest than Aaron. But we Christians have a great High-priest, in whose presence Abram must not glory, Levi has no pre-eminence. To our Melchizedec the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people, do pay, not only tithes, but all they have and are, when they present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service.†

But the circumstances which Moses conceals, are no less worthy of our notice than those he reveals. In vain you ask his genealogy, his birth, his death, or the ceremonies of his consecration: for these are buried in darkness; the Holy Ghost intending to signify, that Jesus Christ is really and truly what

* Zech. vi. 13. † Rom. xii. 1.

this mysterious king is in the history. Without father,—not as he was God, but man.—Without mother,—not as he was man, but God.—Without descent,—for having no predecessors in office, he needed not prove, that he was sprung from the priestly tribe; which was an essential qualification in the Levitical priesthood.—Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,—for being set up from everlasting, he abideth a priest continually: For though he died, yet even in death he was a priest, and now he ever liveth to make intercession for them.——What shall we say more? In the order of Aaron were many priests who, like other mortals, resigning their breath by the stroke of death, their priestly honour was laid in the dust with them. We know from whence they arose; with what carnal ordinances and ceremonies they received their inauguration; what sacrifices they offered; in what holy places they officiated; who assisted them in their various functions; and who succeeded them when they either died, or were deposed from their office. But the priest after the order of Melchizedec, being possessed of immortal life, and called of God, without external ceremonies, to his high office, himself was the sacrifice, himself was the altar, himself was his tabernacle and temple, assisted by none, nor succeeded by any. In Melchizedec, whom Moses speaks of as though he had been immortal, we have but indeed a faint shadow, and not the very image of the things themselves, that are

found in Jesus Christ. But let the faintness of the resemblance remind us of the greatness of the mysteries. "For who shall declare his generation?"

4. THE HISTORY OF ISAAC.

NEXT we shall glance at a very extraordinary piece of history, of the most difficult commandment that was ever given to any of the human race; yet was it punctually obeyed, and the obedience amply rewarded. It is the story of Abram's offering up his son Isaac at the commandment of the Lord.* The famous patriarch had endured many trials, and proved the sincerity of his faith by a long course of obedience, and stedfast dependence on the divine veracity, from the time he was called to leave his native Ur, in the land of Chaldea.—Long did he count him faithful, who had promised that he should have a son, in whom all nations should be blessed, even when the accomplishment of the promise seemed next to impossible. At last the expected child is born, a son of his old age; he flourishes apace, and is now flushed with the radiant bloom of youth, both lovely and beloved. The joyful father might now think, that the most troublesome scenes of life were happily finished, and that it remained for him only to die in faith and peace. But how greatly would he been mistaken? The sorest, the sharpest trial yet remained: For

* See Gen. xxii.

it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I shall tell thee of.* Shocking precept! mysterious mandate! Did ever such a message from God wound a parent's ear! Had the voice from Heaven denounced, that Isaac was to die a natural death, and to be snatched away by a sudden stroke, the tidings had been mournful and agonizing. But how much more when it is declared, that the hand of violence must be lifted against him; that he must be offered up for a burnt-sacrifice, butchered, mangled, and reduced to ashes! But the crowning circumstance that sets forward the calamity, and renders it worse than a thousand deaths; the father must be the priest to bind, to kill, to cut, to burn his beloved son. Abraham, what were the thoughts of thy heart, when your ears first heard such dreadful orders? You were accustomed to hear the voice of God speaking in more soothing accents. Hadst thou not been an extraordinary believer, into what a tempest had all thy soul been tossed? How might reason, natural affection, and religion, have conspired to persuade thy disobedience? "Offer up thy son, thine only son Isaac, for a burnt offering! Can this be the voice of God? Sure it must be the voice of some wicked spirit, that would impose up-

* Gen. xxii. 1. 2.

on my credulity, and urge a father to imbrue his hands in filial blood. But stay: the revelation is unquestionable. It was the very voice of God. I am not permitted so much as to doubt of this. Surely then it must have some other meaning than I first thought. Surely the merciful God cannot mean that I should really kill my Isaac. Take now thy son, thine only son, and offer him up for a burnt-offering. Alas! my Isaac, was it for this I received thee by special promise? Was it for this thy mother brought thee forth, when she was past her age, and I called thee by a name expressive of joy and laughter? How ill dost thou now answer thy name! Thou art not a son of laughter, but of sorrow. O God, why couldst thou not rather have demanded all my numerous flocks and kids, to smoke in one great burnt-offering? Or if a human sacrifice delighted thee more, why should my Isaac, rather than any other, be the victim? O that I could redeem his life with my own blood!"

"And must I too be the priest? Must he bleed by a father's hand? Ah! what will the world say? They will never believe me, when I tell them it was by thy order I did it. What will Sarah say? But chiefly, what will come of thy own promise? How will he be the father of many nations when he is no more? O ye nations! I thought that in this my Isaac you would all be blessed: But now farewell for ever all such pleasing hopes. Isaac must die, and the promise fails for evermore!"

But so strong was the faith of this eminent believer, that either such misgiving thoughts were altogether strangers to his mind, or they were soon repelled. He wisely considered, that what God had commanded, could not be wrong; and what he had promised, could not be false. "Be hushed all unbelieving fears: For he who gave an Isaac from the barren womb to fulfil his promise, can, if he please, for the same reason, restore him from the burning altar. Come then, without delay, obey the high command, believing that what he has promised, he is able also to perform."

No sooner had the early dawn begun to appear in the eastern sky, than the resolved patriarch springs from his couch, saddles an ass, takes with him the intended victim and servants, as much wood as he thought necessary, and proper utensils for the future sacrifice. Three days they travelled on this strange journey, and all that space he looked on his son as dead; but the steady purpose of his soul was not shaken. On the third day the fatal hills of Moriah are descried at a distance, the servants are left behind, the wood is laid on Isaac, and Abraham carries the fire and the knife. And now, after some endearing conversation, they are arrived at the appointed place. The altar is built; the wood is laid in order; the plot is doubtless revealed to Isaac by his sedate father; and Isaac, though fully able to have made resistance, or delivered himself by flight, is not recorded to have attempted the one or the oth-

er: for the same almighty power that touched the patriarch's heart, and made him willing to give the deadly stab, did also, beyond all doubt, make Isaac no less willing cheerfully to receive it. He is bound like another victim; he is laid upon the altar, and the hand now grasps the fatal knife to be lodged in his guiltless breast; when lo, a heavenly voice forbids the bloody deed, and the patriarch's willing mind is accepted for the actual sacrifice. His fear of God is highly applauded, and by his works his faith was proved to be perfect. "Abram, you spared not your son for the sake of my command, but I spare him for the sake of thy obedience. Receive him again with my blessing. He shall be the progenitor of the Messiah, and all the nations shall be blessed in him." A ram caught by the horns in the thicket supplies the room of Isaac, and the grateful patriarch acknowledges the happy providence, in calling the name of the place JEHOVAH-JIREH. And afterwards it became a common proverb, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

O the inconceivable power of faith, that can render the most difficult duties so easy! Nor is there a better way for the children of Abraham to insure their dearest enjoyments, and improve them to the highest advantage than by resigning them, totally resigning them to the sovereign will of God. But surely a higher mystery was contained in this extraordinary occurrence. Who can forbear here to

* Gen. xxii. 14.

think of the adorable mystery of redemption by Jesus Christ? For God so loved the world, as not to spare his own Son, but deliver him unto the death for us all.* Methinks the language of this whole transaction was as if God had said, "Ye children of men, hear you what my faithful servant and friend has done upon this mountain, in cheerfully sacrificing his only son to testify his love to God. By the same method I will declare my love to a perishing world, by giving my only begotten Son to fall a sacrifice for sin. In this mountain shall the sword of justice awake against him by his own consent; and what has now been done only in a figure, shall be really transacted at the appointed time. Meanwhile let rams, and other beasts, be sacrificed as a memorial of this grand burnt-offering; but let no human blood smoke on my altars."

But more particularly to enumerate the important predictions of this prophetical history. It contained, first of all, a lively intimation, that in the fullness of time a human sacrifice should be offered up. Indeed it is but just and equal the nature that sinned should suffer: for how can the blood of harmless beasts atone for the sins of guilty men? And this might seem to have been confessed by the horrid custom that obtained in the Gentile world, of sacrificing men to appease the wrath of their deities. But the living and true God discharged such direful offerings under the severest penalties; not only for

* Rom. viii. 32.

their evident barbarity, but because they encroached upon the plan of his infinite wisdom, and anticipated the great propitiation, who was to be a human sacrifice, although he was no ordinary person, as Isaac was not an ordinary son. Like Isaac he was a Son and heir, the Son of God, and the heir of all things.—A beloved Son; for he was daily his delight, before the mountains were brought forth; and oftener than once it was declared by voice from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*—An only Son; for angels and saints, though stiled the sons of God, have no claim to such a sonship as the filial Godhead is possessed of. Isaac, thy birth was altogether extraordinary, both by the father's and mother's side, surpassing the ordinary course of nature; but still more amazing is the generation of our atoning sacrifice, whose Father as God was the all-glorious Jehovah, and whose mother was a virgin. The event of his birth, like Isaac's, was long foretold, and ardently expected before it happened; but though long delayed, the promise was punctually fulfilled at the appointed time. His name imported joy and gladness. In Jesus, the true Isaac, our mouths shall be filled with laughter, and our tongue with melody.

Ask you the manner of his death? Behold it in this lively type. For as Isaac carried the wood, so the beloved Son of God carried his cross. O ye children of men, your iniquities were the heavy load.

* Matth. xvii. 5.

he bore in his own body on the tree. These, like the wood that was intended to reduce Isaac to ashes, rendered him combustible to the fire of divine wrath.

It was for no crime that Isaac was to suffer death in this tragical manner; yet such was his filial piety, such was his reverence of the high command, that he made no attempt to save his life, though he was able to have done it, being arrived at his youthful prime. Even so the innocent Redeemer, in whom was found no cause of death, no not by his very judge, he abhorred not the ignominious cross; he spared to employ all the legions of angels that were ready at his beck; he never attempted to make his escape when his time was come, which he had often done before. Though he had thoroughly digested in his mind the doleful circumstances of his crucifixion, he betrayed not the least unwillingness to submit to his Heavenly Father's will, even when his human heart shrinked at the bitter cup. I lay down, says he, my life: no man taketh it from me. This commandment have I received from my Father.* Father, not my will, but thine be done.†

It was by a wound from the hand of his father alone that Isaac was to breathe out his soul, and by him alone was the funeral pile to be lighted up. For these purposes, we are informed in the sacred history, he carried the fire and the knife. It was not the envy of the Jews; it was not the covetousness

* John x. 17. 18. † Luke xxii. 42.

of Judas; it was not the irresolution of the cowardly Roman judge, that chiefly consigned our Isaac over to the tormenting cross: but being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, these only proved the sinful executioners of the high decree. Thy burning anger against the sins of men, O Heavenly Father, was the fire that preyed upon his holy soul. Thy justice, inflexibly severe, was the keen flashing sword which awaked against him, and drank his vital blood. It pleased the Father to bruise him: thou didst put him to grief.* And truly many of the sufferings of our dying Redeemer were of such a nature, that none but God could inflict, and none but God could have endured.

Beyond all peradventure, the scene where these things were transacted by Abraham, being in the land of Moriah, could not be far distant from the horrid eminence of Calvary, or the lovely heights of Zion. It is a circumstance by no means unworthy of our careful attention, that the true propitiation was offered up nearly in the same place where the beloved son of Abraham was to expire upon the altar. Ye mountains of Moriah, your name may now be JEHOVAH-JIREH, for better reasons than when Abraham offered up for his Isaac, the ram which was caught in the thicket; for God has now provided himself a Lamb, and in these mountains the Lord was seen putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

* Isa. liii. 10.

It was not possible for a mortal creature to give a higher document of love to God, than by sacrificing for his sake a dearly beloved and only son. The whole history is so amazing, that we know not whether we should most admire the strange commandment or the unparallelled obedience. Even so it was not possible for the immortal God to give a nobler demonstration of love to men, than by delivering for their sake his only begotten Son to die for their offences: the whole transaction, from first to last, is of such uncommon nature, and so foreign to every human plan for acceptance with God, that to the wise Greeks it was mere foolishness, and to the Jews a stumbling-block. As Abraham could not without faith have acquiesced in the precept, no more can we without faith acquiesce in the gospel-plan. He consulted not with Sarah, when he was called to obey; and when we are called to believe, we must not consult with vain philosophy. Though in the mystery of redemption there is a depth of wisdom, thy line, O reason, is too short to sound its bottom. Reason, especially in its depraved state, may not unfitly be compared to the patriarch's ass, which staid at the foot of the hill, but ascended not with Isaac to the sacrifice. It is the province of faith alone to ascend this hill of the Lord, and comprehend the love of God which passeth knowledge.

Isaac, it is true, was not sacrificed; and there was no need that God should raise him from the dead, as the patriarch perhaps expected. But as he

was in a manner a dead man during all the three days that intervened betwixt the sentence being passed against him, and the reversing of it by the heavenly voice, it may be truly said, that in a figure he was received from the dead.* Exactly so, our true Isaac was received on the third day from the dead, not in a figure only. Like Isaac, he felt no harm; but, O death, he was thy plague; O grave, he was thy destruction.† Like Isaac, he returned to his Father's house from whence he came, and became a Father of many nations, who are begotten again to a lively hope by his resurrection from the dead: for thus the prophet Isaiah foretels, with admirable plainness and propriety, When thou, O Heavenly Father, shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.‡

Forbear, ye children of men, anxiously to inquire, Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and how shall I bow myself before the high God? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, and the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? For lo, he has given his first-born to atone for your transgression, and the Son of his love to expiate the sin of your souls by the sacrifice of himself. Thus hath he shewed you what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?§

* Heb. xi. 19. † Hos. xiii. 14. ‡ Is. liii. 10. § Mic. vi. 6. 7. 8.

5. THE HISTORY OF JACOB.

THE history of Jacob's life is also stored with very remarkable incidents, not unlike those which befel our Lord Jesus Christ, or which have befallen the church, which is his body, and his other self, in all ages of the world. The truth of this will easily appear in the following parallel.

1. The Patriarch Jacob was chosen by God, who loved him before he was born, to be the progenitor of the Jewish nation, who also were chosen in him rather than the posterity of Esau, called in the stile of the prophet, the border of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever.——2. From this patriarch the Jews the peculiar people of God, are named Israelites.——3. From him sprung the twelve patriarchs, who were the fathers of that holy nation according to the flesh.——4. Many

1. The Lord Jesus Christ, being from all everlasting the peculiar object of the Father's love, was chosen by him before the mountains were brought forth, to be the Father of the nations of them who are saved; who are also chosen in him that they should be holy, and distinguished from the world that lies in wickedness.—2. From Jesus Christ, the chosen generation are named Christians.—3. And the twelve apostles of the Lamb, are the fathers of the holy nation according to the spirit.—4. Behold and see, was ever any

and great were the hardships which this patriarch conflicted with during the course of his pilgrimage; for it appears that he was the most afflicted of all his race, both on account of the treatment he met with from Esau, from Laban, and from God himself. ——5. Very early he began to struggle with his rough brother Esau, who carried his enmity to such a high pitch, as to resolve to murder him, for no other fault than excluding him from the privilege of birthright, which himself had justly forfeited, by selling it for a morsel of meat; and therefore when he would afterwards have inherited the blessing, he could not by all his tears induce his father to bestow it upon him.—6. In vain shall you think, O sorrow like unto his? for his whole life was a continual war with woe. He was afflicted by the world, harrassed by the devil, and persecuted even by God himself.—5. Early, very early, he felt the effects of the world's undeserved malice. And his rough brethren the Jews were so highly incensed against him, as to embrue their hands in his blood. And wherefore did ye thus hate him, O ye malicious Jews? It was because you gloried in your birthright, and could not endure that the kingdom of God should, according to his doctrine, be taken from you, and transferred to the despised Gentiles, though you had justly forfeited all title to such a glorious prerogative by your great contempt of spiritual and

profane Esau, to thwart the unalterable decree; for the elder shall serve the younger, and the posterity of Jacob shall put garrisons in thy strong holds.——7. With his staff he passed over Jordan, an exile from his father's house; he served for a wife, and returned again with much substance, having multiplied into two bands.——8. He spoiled Laban of his substance and idols. But when he followed after him, to rummage Jacob's tents, he found nothing that belonged to him. And when he departed from Jacob, the angels of God met him, and he called the place Mahanaim. But the conflict which Jacob had with God was by far the most mysterious affliction. Never was the patriarch in greater distress.

heavenly blessings.——6. But be of good cheer, ye children of Jesus Christ, your Lord and Master has overcome the world. And the time shall come, when the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom; and it shall be said, Who is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah?——7. With the staff of his cross he passed over the Jordan of death; and wandering in exile from heaven, his Father's house, he took on him the form of a servant, (such was his love to the church); and afterwards he was followed by the two bands of Jews and Gentiles.——8. The devil suspecting that this was the strong man who was to spoil his goods, and utterly abolish the idols, fiercely assaulted him;

Retired from his family, and all alone, expecting his brother Esau to come upon him with four hundred armed men, he pours out his prayer to God; and there wrestled a man with him till the breaking of the day, to whom he wept, and made supplication. But at last he is victorious; his life is preserved; and he obtains the blessing.

but when the prince of this world came unto him in the day of his temptation, he found nothing in him; and when he left our Saviour, the angels came and ministered unto him.—But the conflict which our Lord had with the wrath of God, was the greatest of all his afflictions. It was the lively feeling of almighty anger that made him sweat blood: when retired from his disciples, and expecting the multitude to come upon him with swords and staves, he offered up prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death. But at last he prevails to obtain the blessing, having endured the wrath of God.

And as Jacob was obliged to go down to Egypt in his old age, to preserve his life from a cruel famine;

so Christ Jesus fled into Egypt when he was a child, to preserve his life from a bloody tyrant. Afterwards was the saying of the prophet fulfilled, Out of Egypt have I called my Son.* And lastly, As Jacob left the world blessing his sons; so Christ left the world blessing his apostles.

But he was also a type of the mystical body of Christ, and indeed of every saint,—whether you view him as chosen in the womb,—striving at his birth,—buying the birthright,—meeting the angels of God,—wrestling with the Angel of the covenant,—or buried in Canaan after a troublesome life. Behold in all these an emblem of every one who is an Israelite indeed.

His election in the womb signifies how all the seed of Jacob are chosen to salvation. Was not Esau Jacob's brother † his elder brother, and indeed a stronger child? for his hairy skin portended the vigor of his constitution. Yet was he not chosen to inherit the patriarchal blessing. The happy persons whom he chuses to inherit the blessings of eternity, are so far from being better than other their fellow-creatures, that, for the most part, they are greatly inferior, both in the endowments of the mind, and outward worldly distinctions. Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight!‡

His struggling at his birth, when he took hold of his brother's heal, might be intended to signify, that every true Israelite must strive, before he come

* Matt. ii. 15. † Mal. i. 2. ‡ Matt. xi. 26.

to the possession of those blessings that are designed for him in the purpose of God. Electing love indeed prevents, but not excludes, our fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold upon eternal life. Miserably shall they be disappointed, who dream of seizing the kingdom of heaven without violence. When the husbandman can reasonably hope, that indolence will fill his barns with plenty; when the soldier can think that victory will present him with her palms, without striking a blow; then may the yawning Christian, whom it grieves to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, expect to reap fruit unto life eternal, and tread upon the high-places of his spiritual foes.

His buying the birthright for pottage, ludicrous as it seems, perhaps may denote the high esteem which all the true seed of Jacob have of spiritual blessings. O wretched exchange! to barter for the satisfaction of a moment, what was more valuable than a hundred lives! Profane Esau, was it nothing valuable to inherit the blessing of Abraham, to be the progenitor of the Messiah, and to entail on thy posterity the true knowledge of God? All this was undervalued, when the birthright was despised. Ye Esaus of the world, take to yourselves your present sensual gratifications, and esteem nothing good but present satisfactions, fill your bellies with the hidden treasure of God, and for the short-lived pleasures of sin, renounce your part in heavenly felicities, and bury, without one sigh, each glori-

ous hope. But let the house of Israel labour for the meat that endures to everlasting life; let them implore the cheerful light of God's countenance; let them enjoy the vision of his face in righteousness; and when inspired with these blissful expectations, all sublunary joys shall in comparison be no more regarded, than was thy pottage, Jacob, in comparison of the birthright.

His receiving the blessing from his father in the garments of Esau, with which his mother arrayed him, may be viewed as a faint shadow of our receiving the blessing from God in the garments of Jesus Christ, which all the children of the promise do wear. When found in Christ, and clothed with the perfumed robes of righteousness imputed, the garments of our elder brother, our gracious God and Father will forget our sinful imperfections, and beholding no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel, will bless us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. It was not the feigned venison, but the borrowed garments, that procured the blessing. Even so we are not blessed by God for our good works, however pleasing unto him, but for the righteousness of our Redeemer: for should we presume to appear in the presence of Jehovah without this most necessary precaution, of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, our performances, however specious, could meet with no acceptance, but the evil which Jacob greatly feared would come upon us; we would procure to ourselves a curse, and not a blessing.

His meeting the angels, after his interview with Laban, when he called the name of the place Mahanaim, was not only designed to animate his courage amidst the dangers that surrounded him in that journey; but also to hint unto us what is the distinguished privilege of all the children of Jacob in their militant state: for the angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear him.* The despiser of his birthright, whose resentment Jacob dreaded, comes indeed escorted by four hundred men. But what were these to Jacob's invisible guard? This honour have all his saints, who come to the innumerable company of angels, the ministrant spirits of the heirs of salvation, and the bright guardians of the just.

His wrestling with the Angel, who doubtless was the Captain of the host that appeared to him in the likeness of a man (a prelude of his future incarnation), over whom he obtained the victory, and from whom he received the blessing, when he wept, and made supplication,—may be considered as a figure of that great fight of affliction which the beloved of the Lord may lay their account with in the night of this world. Even the Lord himself may seem to stand against them with his right hand as an adversary. But the mighty wrestler with Jacob assumed no greater strength than might be overcome; so God that is faithful, will proportion the trials of his people to the strength he has given them. And by

* Psal. xxxiv. 7.

their strength (which yet is not their own) they shall prevail; for he that is in appearance against, is really for them, and stronger for them than against them. If he casts down, it is but with his left, but he upholds them with his right hand. Mysterious, but comforting truth! hard to express, but sweet to know. Never was Jacob more happy, than when he seemed most miserable; nor more strong, than when he seemed most weak; for at once he was lamed and blessed, conquered and victorious. A lively emblem this of what usually befals the remnant of Jacob! for "happy is the man whom God correcteth." The love of the Lord towards the children of Israel is written in the most rigorous dispensations: when they are weak, then they are strong; and what he takes away from them in one way, he restores to advantage in another. O happy they who think it no solitude to be alone with God! Glorious things are spoken of thee, O duty of prayer! He who can prevail with God, needs not fear that man should prevail against him.

His burial in Canaan, the land of promise, after a life of singular affliction, may represent the distinguished lot of all the faithful, chosen, and called, who, after a short course of pilgrimage, harrassed with anxious cares and sorrows, do rest in the promised land of the heavenly Canaan. And truly, the beloved Jacob had shared no happiness, to be compared with hated Esau's, if in this life only he had hope. Who would not rather judge, that Esau was beloved of

God, and Jacob hated, if love or hatred could certainly be known by that which happens under the sun? And were the Christian to bound his views by the grave, should his hopes terminate in death; ah! then, he were the most wretched of his race, and at his best estate he were altogether vanity.

O eternal joys above! O glorious rewards! reserved in heaven for those who seek for glory, honour, and blissful immortality, by patient continuance in well-doing; without you, even pure and undefiled religion could scarce compensate the afflictions of this present life, to which we are exposed as men and Christians. But these assert the glorious prerogative of religion, and the superior happiness of saints. Though the days of their pilgrimage, like Jacob's, be few and evil; yet still they are a people saved by the Lord, who has blessed them, and they shall be blessed.

6. THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

THE history of Joseph's life is doubtless one of the most entertaining and eventful of which all antiquity can boast. Upon it are inscribed, in most lively characters, at once the terrible effects of malice and envy, and the watchful care of Providence over the cause of injured virtue and innocence. But the most remarkable thing that claims our attention here, is the surprising likeness betwixt the whole narrative and the history of Jesus Christ,

of whom it may truly be said, The archers have sorely grieved him, but his bow abode in its strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.*

He was the beloved son of his father Jacob: and truly he seems to have been worthy of such paternal favour; for detesting the wickedness of his brethren, he reported their faults. This, with his prophetic dreams of which he told them, so stung them with envy and resentment, that they could not speak peaceably to him, nor look at him but with disgust and aversion. Their causeless anger is turned into obdurate hatred of their brother, and soon they find an opportunity of wreaking their bloody rage. He is sent by his father to inquire of their welfare when feeding their flocks in the wilderness; and dreading no harm, as he was innocent, and stranger to offence, he carefully inquires after them, till at last he finds them out. But, ah! He looked for brethren, and behold murderers! Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous: but who can stand before baleful envy?† Transported with this blind fury they not only forget that they are brethren, but forget that they are men; and take horrid counsel against the darling youth, to embrue their hands in his guiltless blood. One more merciful than the rest moves, that they cast him into a pit, rather than murder him outright: for he intended by this artifice at once to indulge their fury and to elude it, by

* Gen. xlix. 23. 24. † Prov. xxvii. 4.

finding means to restore him again to his father.—The motion takes. They strip him of his garment with many colours; and regardless of the anguish of his soul, they let him down into the pit; but themselves, O cruel monsters! sat down to eat and drink, for they were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.* Here they designed to leave him to perish miserably in mournful solitude; but Providence reserved him to better things: for lifting up their eyes, they see approaching a company of merchants, who were of Ishmael's race and carried balm and myrrh from mount Gilead into Egypt.† Then did his savage brethren resolve to sell Egypt's future lord to the merchants for twenty pieces of silver: and to cloke their matchless villainy, they dipt his garment in blood, and shewing it to his father, pretended that some wild beast had devoured him.—Such were once the men, O ye Jews, in whom ye glory as your progenitors! The innocent sufferer is sold a second time to Potiphar in Egypt, in whose service he acquitted himself so well, as to gain the good graces of his master who reposed in him the most entire confidence, and intrusted him with the sole management of his affairs. But soon, alas! the temptations of his mistress are likely to prove no less dangerous than the malice of his brethren.—He preserved indeed his chastity by the fear of the Lord; but incurring the undeserved suspicion of a base crime, he is committed to the dungeon by his

* Amos vi. 6. † Gen. xxxvii. 25.

too partial master, as before he had been cast into the pit by his cruel brethren. But the king sent and loosed him, and the ruler of the people set him free.* For as he exposed himself to all his troublesome adventures, by telling his own dreams; so, by interpreting the dreams of others, he laid the foundation of his subsequent grandeur. On sudden his prison is turned a palace, his irons a chain of gold. Potiphar's servant is become Potiphar's lord. He whose feet were hurt with fetters, now binds the princes at pleasure, and teaches the senators wisdom.† And as he moves along the crouded streets, a herald proclaims before him, Bow the knee.‡ And now he feeds from his hoarded granaries the starving nations; for he wisely provided against the approach of the famine he foretold. The subjects of Pharaoh acknowledge him the saviour of their lives. His unkind brethren, impelled by hunger, and hard necessity, come also among the supplicants, to fulfil his dreams, which they once vainly imagined they had rendered for ever abortive. He remembered the traces of their countenances; and by various harsh methods, he explores the sincerity of their repentance, and acquaints himself with the circumstances of their family. At last his bowels yearning towards them, and piteous of their misery, as being sufficiently chastised, he makes himself known to them; buries in oblivion their past misdemeanours; and transports them to dwell with him, where he nourishes them

* Psal. cv. 20. † Ver. 18 22. ‡ Gen. xli. 43.

like a father in the midst of a terrible and extensive famine. And thus what was intended by the wickedness of men as the means of extirpating the name of Joseph out of the earth, was over-ruled by the wisdom of God, for bringing about his glorious exaltation, for saving the lives of much people, and even the lives of those who sought his death.

Which things are an allegory. For Jesus Christ is the true Joseph, if you view him as a beloved Son; an affectionate brother; a trusty servant; an illuminated prophet; a resister of temptations; a forgiver of injuries; but chiefly if you consider him as an innocent sufferer; an exalted Prince; and a universal Saviour.

Like Joseph, he was a beloved Son, whom God the Father has blessed above all his brethren. Jacob made for Joseph a garment of divers colours; and God prepared for Christ a body curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth. Like Joseph he is an affectionate brother. He came to seek his brethren in the wilderness of this world, though they received him not. He knows them when they know not him; and his bowels yearn towards them, even when he seems severe. He may deal roughly with them at first, but he will have mercy upon them at the last. He liberally supplies their wants without money and without price; and at last will bring them to dwell with him in the heavenly Canaan, where they shall behold his glory, and be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house. Like Jo-

seph, he was a trusty servant, acquitting himself dexterously in every part of the work that was given him to do: even as the prophet also foretels, Behold my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted, he shall be extolled, and be very high.* Like Joseph, he is a most illuminated prophet, in whom the Spirit of God is,—none so discreet and wise as he—the true Zaphnathpaaneah, or revealer of secrets, who is worthy to take the sealed book of God's decrees, and open its seven seals. Like Joseph, he was a resister of temptations; for he was solicited in vain to spiritual adultery by the great enemy of salvation, when he said unto him, All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.† Though this harlot world hath cast down, wounded and slain many strong men, our Joseph overcame her: his heart declined not to her ways: he went not astray in her paths, though in the encounter he was stript of his mortal life, which he willingly resigned. Like Joseph, he was and is a forgiver of injuries: for as on the cross he implored forgiveness to his murderers with his expiring breath; so on the throne he gave repentance unto Israel, and remission of sin, to many of them whose hand had been very deep in that bloody tragedy of his crucifixion being brought to a sincere profession, that, Verily, they were guilty concerning their brother,‡ and the blood which they impiously shed, spoke better things than that of Abel.

* Is. lii. 23. † Matt. iv. 9. ‡ Gen. xlii. 21.

But chiefly let us view him as an innocent sufferer, whose sufferings issued in glory to himself, and universal good to men. Joseph is mortally hated of his brethren, and the butt of their envy, because he exposed their wicked courses, and foretold his own advancement. For these same reasons was Jesus Christ hated by the Jews; and Pilate knew that for envy they delivered him. Joseph was derided of his brethren as an idle fantastic dreamer; and Jesus Christ was esteemed a doting enthusiast, a madman, and one beside himself. Joseph's brethren conspired against him to take away his life; and of Jesus Christ it is prophesied, Why do the Heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing, to plot against the Lord, and against his Anointed?* Joseph's brethren stript him of his garments which his father made for him; and of Jesus Christ it is said, They parted my garments among them, and cast lots for my vesture.† Joseph was cast into a pit, but he remained not long there; Jesus Christ was laid in the grave, but he saw no corruption.—Joseph was sold for a servant by the advice of the patriarch Judah; and Jesus Christ was, by the apostle Judas, sold for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave: a goodly price he was prized at by them! Joseph was unjustly accused in Egypt, and cast into a dungeon with two noted criminals, Pharaoh's butler and baker; Jesus Christ was unjustly condemned in Canaan, and crucified between two thieves.—

* Ps. ii. 12. † Ps. xxii. 18.

Joseph adjudged the one criminal to death, and the other to life, from the same omens; Jesus Christ adjudged one of the thieves to everlasting life, while the other was allowed to perish after the same desarts. Joseph intreated the person whom he delivered, to remember him when he came to his glory; but the person whom Jesus Christ delivered prayed him, O Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* Joseph indeed could but foretel his companion's deliverance; but Christ Jesus effected, by his own power, what he foretold, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.†

Such were the patriarch's unparalleled afflictions; but as he soon emerged from these deep plunges of adversity, becoming, instead of a furlorn prisoner, a prime minister of state; so Jesus Christ was taken from prison and from judgment, and receives from God the Father, honour and glory, and a name above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.‡ Behold, ye mistaken Jews, how vain were all your machinations to frustrate his predictions! Even you yourselves became subservient to fulfil the grand design, when you killed the Prince of life, who was, by suffering death, to enter into his glory. Here the patriarch's speech to his penitent brethren may fitly be applied, As for you, ye

* Luke xxiii. 42. † Ver. 43. ‡ Phil. ii. 9. 10. 11.

thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as at this day, to save much people alive.*

For, as the sufferings and glory of Joseph issued in the common salvation of the lives of Pharaoh's subjects, and the family of Jacob, who was a Syrian ready to perish; even so thy sufferings, and thy glory, O thou once humbled, but now exalted Redeemer, were ordained for the salvation of the world, both Jews and Gentiles, from a far more dreadful destruction than a famine of bread or water! Go unto this Joseph for the supply of your numerous wants, ye who are ready to perish. His fullness shall never be exhausted, be their number ever so great who receive out of it. O that his glory might be the joy of our heart, and the grand theme of every tongue! With what cheerfulness ought we to forsake the stuff of all terrestrial things, when Joseph is alive, that we may be with him, where he is, and enjoy these blessings that are "on the head of Jesus Christ, and on the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren."

7. THE HISTORY OF MOSES.

THOUGH Christ and Moses may seem indeed, in one view, to be as unlike one another as the gospel and the law; as the ministration of righteousness and the ministration of condemnation: we may, however, observe in the character and history of this extraordinary man, a great resemblance to

* Gen. l. 20.

those of Jesus Christ; whether we consider him as a deliverer, a mediator, a lawgiver, or a prophet.

First. Let us view Moses as a deliverer of his nation from the bondage of Egypt. To this end he was born; and when his life was sought by a bloody tyrant, who murdered his fellow-infants, he was miraculously preserved by his reputed mother, who gave him a royal education. But when he was come to years, and capable of judging for himself, he despised the pleasures of a court, and chose rather to claim kindred with oppressed slaves, because they were the people of God, than with the daughter of Pharaoh, by whose right perhaps he might have inherited the crown of Egypt. At last, though his very brethren thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge?* he accomplishes their rescue from the land of Nile, spoiling the Egyptians of their gold and silver, destroying their first-born, and drowning in the Red Sea the flower of their army; and all this by means of the blood of a lamb which he shed, and by his wonder-working rod.———Even so the birth of the deliverer, who came to Zion to rescue from the oppression of far worse enemies than the Egyptians or the Romans, was signalized with the cruel butchering of the infants in Bethlehem by Herod's ministers of blood.—But the persecuted babe finds a safe retreat in Egypt, whither he was conveyed by the guardian care of his supposed father. And when he was come to

* Acts vii. 35.

years, he disdained an earthly crown, when the Jews would have taken him by force, and made him a king; as before he had in a sort left for a time the court of heaven, the bosom of his Father, and the songs of hymning cherubim, to endure, in these regions of mortality, affliction for the people of God: for as Moses had a respect to the recompence of reward; so he, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame.* And though his brethren understood not at first, that God, by his hand, would deliver them,† and refused him as an impostor; at last he accomplishes their redemption from the cruel bondage of the devil, whose power he destroyed, by shedding his own blood, and by sending the rod of his strength out of Zion. By these despised means does the Captain of salvation bring many sons to glory, through raging seas of affliction, through waste and howling wildernesses of various temptations, till they arrive in that happy country which God has espied for them, which is the glory of all lands.

As by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt; it is further to be observed, that he acted the part of a mediator between God and Israel, both when they fought with Amalek, when they received the law, and when they made the calf in Horeb: in all which instances he may be viewed as a lively type of the one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.——When the militant church

* Heb xii. 2. † Acts vii. 25.

is fighting in the valley of this world, as an Amalek shall never be wanting from generation to generation, their victory depends not so much on their own prowess and martial skill, as on the lifting up the hands of our great Intercessor, who, like Moses, appears in the presence of God upon a high mountain and eminent, even far above all heavens. Behold, all ye who are fighting the good fight of faith, how your great Mediator's hands are lifted up towards the throne of God. The hands of Moses could not long endure to be stretched out; they were heavy and weak, and behoved to be strengthened and supported. But Jesus Christ, he fainteth not, neither is weary, though his hands be stretched out still: therefore shall ye prevail who fight under his banner, and have reason to say, Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.*—And as the law was ordained by angels in the hand of Moses as a mediator; (for they to whom it was published were afraid by reason of the fire, and dreadful sound which they heard, and went not up to the mount); so Jesus Christ our Lord stands betwixt the terrible majesty of an angry God, and feeble guilty man, unable to appear in the presence of his glory: like Moses, he engaged his heart to approach unto God. But Moses only reported the law to the people, he fulfilled the law. Moses quaked, and Christ was sore amazed, insomuch that he sweated blood from all the pores of his

* 1 Cor. xv. 57.

body. Be not afraid, ye redeemed of the Lord, "Ye believe in God, believe also in him." Though our God be a consuming fire, the all-gracious Mediator hath quenched the flames, and husht the storm of wrath by his seasonable interposition, and the fiery law is now turned into a directing light.—And lastly, he acted the part of a mediator, when they made the calf in Horeb. When the anger of the Lord was justly incensed against them for that enormous crime, Moses said unto the people, I will go unto the Lord, peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, This people have sinned a grievous sin. But now, if thou wilt forgive their sin: if not, blot me out of the book which thou hast written.* Perhaps he intended to seek, that the almighty vengeance might rather fall on his own head, than that the whole nation should perish, though he was not certain whether the offered propitiation would be accepted. But Jesus Christ has not only offered himself to die for the guilty race, but has actually made the atonement which Moses proposed to make, and is set forth for a propitiation through faith in his blood.

Next, let us view him as a lawgiver, as the children of Israel sung, Moses commanded us a law, the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob: and he was king in Jeshurun.† But we Christians may say, in the language of the prophet, The Lord is

* Exod. xxxii. 30. 31. 32. † Deut. xxxiii. 4. 5.

our judge, the Lord is our king, the lord is our lawgiver: he will save us.* A law is now gone forth of Zion; but, Moses, not like thine, consisting of carnal ordinances,—a law not of works but faith,—a law for which the isles of the Gentiles shall wait,—a law which is not so much obeyed by doing, as by believing,—and which never will stand in need of reformation or repeal.

But, lastly, let us view him in his prophetic character, of whom it is testified, There arose no prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, to whom the Lord spoke face to face.† Yet Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; and him shall you hear in all things.‡ Though we had not the express authority of an apostle, for the application of this prediction, to the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, we can scarcely be at loss to see how it can agree to none other. He, he is that prophet that should come unto the world, of whom Moses wrote, and who is like unto him, if you consider——The stock from whence he sprung, for he was raised from among his brethren, not assuming the nature of angels, but the nature of man, and of the seed of Abraham.——The meekness of his temper, which excelled the meekness of Moses, as far as the meekness of Moses excelled the meekness of other men. The Hebrew lawgiver, meek as he was, cannot be altogether freed from sallies of

* Is. xxxiii. 22. † Deut. xxxiv. 10. ‡ Deut. xviii. 15.

impatience ; but the meek and lowly Jesus, who calls us to learn of him, was never indecently transported with rage, nor uttered one word unadvisedly with his lips, though upon the most provoking occasion.——The lustre of his face. For not to mention his transfiguration on the mount, when his face did shine as the sun, he is in his divine person the brightness of his Father's glory, which, like Moses, he covered with the vail of his flesh, when he descended into our world, that he might be qualified for holding familiar converse with men upon earth, his terror not making them afraid. For if the face of Moses, the servant, did shine with such dazzling glory, by a short abode, in the presence of Jehovah on an earthly mount, that the Israelites could not endure to behold him without a vail ; how much less could the feeble eyes of mortal men have endured the face of Christ the Son, who abideth from everlasting in the presence of Jehovah, was daily his delight, had he shone forth, in all the blaze of Deity, without the thick vail of his flesh?——The clearness of his manifestations. Of Moses indeed it is said "With him I will speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold ;" whereas it was usual for the prophets of inferior rank, to receive the intimations of the divine will in dreams when they were asleep, and ecstacies when awake. But of this prophet in the New-Testament church his harbinger declares, No man hath seen God at

any time; but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*——His fidelity in executing his commission: for, The words the Father gave unto him, he gave unto them; and as the Father gave him commandment, so he spake. Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, but Christ as a Son over his own house.†——The opposition he met with from Jews and Gentiles. He endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses. And as his nearest relations quarrelled with him for marrying Zipporah, the Ethiopian woman, so did the Jews with Christ, for espousing the Gentile church.——The miracles he wrought. "It was never so seen in Israel." Like Moses, he fed the Israelites in the wilderness, and their leaving was as miraculous as their eating.

What Moses did literally, the same Christ does spiritually for the beloved Israel. He sweetens their bitter waters; cures their diseases; supplies their wants. Like Moses, he fasted forty days; and like Moses, he died at the commandment of the Lord.

8. THE ORDINANCE OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

AS the sun paints the clouds with variety of glorious colours, which, in their own nature, are but dark and lowering vapours exhaled from the

* John i. 18. † Heb. iii 5 6.

earth; so when the Sun of righteousness arises, even the carnal ordinances and commandments of the law, dark and earthly as they seem, are gilded by his beams, and wear a smiling appearance. By his kindly influence, who is the light of the world, the most barren places of the scripture rejoice, and blossom as the rose. What portion of sacred writ is more apt to be perused without edification and delight, than what relates to the Levitical priesthood; the qualifications of their persons, their apparel, their consecration, and different parts of their function? And indeed it must be confessed a very hard task to reconcile with the wisdom of God the injoining such numberless rites, purely for their own sake.—But when we consider that Aaron, and his successors, were figures of our great High Priest, we must acknowledge, that these injunctions are neither unworthy of God, nor useless to man, but are profitable for doctrine, and instruction in righteousness.—We shall instance in a few things.

And, first, we shall take notice of the laws relating to the persons of Aaron and his sons. Whosoever he was that approached to God in the character of a high priest, he behoved, according to the law of Moses, to be of the stock of Israel, the tribe of Levi, the family of Aaron, having his genealogy well attested, his body sound, his life temperate, (for he was not to drink wine, or other intoxicating liquors); his wife must be either a virgin, or the widow of a priest, but by no means a divorced wo-

man, or a harlot: and, lastly, it was absolutely forbidden that he should go out of the sanctuary to mourn for the dead, unless they were his nearest relations. Let us apply these things to our High Priest. It must indeed be acknowledged, that he was neither of the tribe of Levi, nor family of Aaron; for, It is evident our Lord sprang out of Judah, and Moses says nothing of the priesthood belonging to that tribe.* In this respect, to be sure, he differs from them in a very essential point, which, however it disqualified him from officiating in the temple, (for if he were on earth he should not be a priest);† yet does not in the least infer his incapacity to be a priest of a higher order than the order of Aaron, that is of the order of Melcizedec, who joined in one person the priest and the king. The character and office of a Levitical priest he never assumed when he was upon earth, as indeed he could not have any claim unto it. What shall we say then? That he is inferior to Aaron and his successors upon this account? Nay, the difference of his tribe is the most convincing proof of the supereminence of his order. Like Aaron, he was taken from among men, and was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and never any priest of them all could boast of such illustrious pedigree as Jesus Christ. Which of them all was born of a virgin? and to which of them said God at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?‡——The genealogy of the ancient priests

* Heb. vii. 14. † Chap. viii. 4. ‡ Heb. ii. 5.

behoved to be firmly documented; but they had no such illustrious proofs of their being the sons of Levi, as Christ had of his being the Son of God, which the Father attested, both by the voice from heaven, and by the mighty works he enabled him to do.—— The soundness of their body was no doubt intended to prefigure the integrity and perfection of the soul of Jesus Christ; for the least deformity here had rendered him utterly incapable of propitiating the Deity, by the sacrifice of himself: for such a high priest became us, who, though falsely accused of many sins, was never convinced of any, but was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,* and a Lamb without blemish, and without spot even in the pure eyes of God.——Their restriction to marry a wife in her virginity, may perhaps denote, that the human nature, which our great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, deigned to wed to his divine person, was not deflowered with sin, but a pure, incorrupted, and holy thing. But, beyond all doubt, we are natively led to think of the whole church, and every member of that society, being presented as chaste virgins unto Christ. In vain does the harlot-church of Rome, that great whore that sits on many waters, claim the high prerogative of being the only spouse of Christ. Hear what the apostle declares of the followers of the Lamb, These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins: these were redeemed from among men, being the

* Heb. vii. 26.

first-fruits to God, and to the Lamb.*——The abstinence from wine and strong drink, which was commanded, was not only designed to inculcate the strictest temperance, (which is a most necessary virtue to the discharge of any important trust that requires the faculties of the mind to be in their most vigorous state); but it may be also viewed as an implicit intimation of that perfect command of himself, which our great High Priest had in the discharging of his office, never forgetting what he was about in the smallest instance, being always found of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, but by no means a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, as the hypocritical Pharisees maliciously affirmed.—The prohibition of going out of the sanctuary to mourn for the dead, was a prediction, that when Jesus Christ should pass into the heavenly sanctuary, he should leave all his sorrows behind him, and dwell for ever in the presence of God, where there is fullness of joy. Moreover, it clearly signifies, that he was to abolish death and the grave. Henceforth let no unmanly tear be shed for the blessed dead, who die in the Lord. That most calamitous event to the eye of sense, is, to the eye of faith, the most happy revolution in the lot of the just.

Nor are the laws about their priestly garments less instructive and significant. The curious materials of the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, might represent the unsearchable riches of Christ,

* Rev. xiv. 4.

and the lustre of those divine graces which adorned his sacred humanity.—The names of the twelve tribes he bore first upon his shoulders, and then upon his breastplate, as a memorial before the Lord continually, engraven on precious stones, and disposed in comely order, is no obscure emblem of the saints, whom our High Priest carries both on the shoulders of his almighty power, and on the breast of cordial love, according to the most pathetic prayer of the spouse, Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm.*—These names were engraven on precious stones: for such are all his saints, though disallowed of men, and trampled under foot as naughty pebbles; yet are they chosen of God, and precious, and they shall be his in the day that he makes up his jewels.—No tribe was wanting in that most costly breastplate; for Jesus Christ knows them by name whom he redeems, both great and small, and there is no respect of persons.—They were arranged in comely order; for he is not the God of confusion, but of order, as in all the churches of the saints.†—They were firmly set, and not slightly put into the breastplate; for all the faithful are so firmly united unto Jesus Christ, that not the smallest jewel can be picked from the breastplate of our Aaron, by the joint efforts of earth and hell.—It was not lawful for the Israelites to enter into the most holy place in their own persons, but in the person of their high priest they entered every year, as

* Song viii. 6. † Cor. xiv 33.

their names were graven on his shoulders and heart, and presented unto JEHOVAH. Even so, in Jesus Christ, the holy Christian nation, who live upon the earth, are entered into the holiest of all, and even sat down with him in heavenly places.——Shall we mention next the Urim and the Thummim that Moses was commanded to put into the breastplate of Aaron? Be it so, we cannot certainly determine the nature or form of this divine workmanship, denoted by such an uncommon phrase; we are certain, however, that in Jesus Christ we have that priest who stands up with Urim and Thummim, and bears the judgment of Israel before the Lord continually. In him are found the clearest light of wisdom, and the greatest perfection of holiness. In him that prayer is fully answered, Give the king thy judgments, O Lord, and the king's son thy righteousness.*——The curious girdle signifies the alacrity wherewith our High Priest discharged every part of his office; for girding up the loins of his mind, he did, with all his might, what his hand found. Aaron's girdle was indeed of costly texture, gold and purple, blue and scarlet. But of Jesus Christ it was prophesied, Faithfulness shall be the girdle of his loins, and righteousness the girdle of his reins.† The beloved apostle John beheld him equipt with this priestly ornament, when he saw him in the visions of God walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, clothed with a long white

* Psal. lxxii. 1. † Is. xi. 5.

garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. The golden bells, suspended around the hem of Aaron's under-robe, may signify the sweet sound of the gospel which is gone into all the earth. O greatly blessed are the people who hear this joyful sound, sweeter to the ear of faith than music, in its softest strains, to the ear of the body; an undoubted sign that our High Priest is alive, though we see him not, and lives for ever in presence of JEHOVAH, to make intercession for us.

The pomegranates that were curiously wrought betwixt the bells, and equal to them in number, may be an emblem of those fruits of righteousnes with which the preaching of the gospel is attended.—— The fair mitre that adorned his head, with the venerable inscription on the plate of gold surrounding his temples, may put us in mind of Jesus Christ, who is the only crowned priest; and not only holy, but holiness itself unto the Lord; yea, he is himself the holy JEHOVAH, and fountain of holiness unto his people. For this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.*

Such were the garments for glory and beauty, the typical priesthood were commanded to wear, and such their mystical signification. Let us come next to the manner of their consecration. The Hebrew lawgiver is directed to bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of the con-

* Jer. xxiii. 6.

gregation: there they were washed with water; arrayed with the priestly vestments; anointed with the costly oil, which it was death to counterfeit; and, lastly, sanctified by the offering up of peculiar sacrifices, whose blood was put upon the extreme parts of their bodies. Though every minute circumstance in these venerable rites may not be capable of application to Jesus Christ, it is sufficient if we can observe a general analogy. Aaron was washed in water, to signify that he was before poluted; and Christ was baptized, not indeed because he was himself poluted, but as it became him to fulfil all righteousness. Aaron was arrayed with the appointed vestments; and Christ was clothed with the garment of our flesh, curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth. Aaron was anointed with oil, wherewith the inferior priests were but sprinkled; but Christ is anointed with the Holy Ghost, which God gives not by measure unto him. Aaron was consecrated with the blood of beasts; but Christ was sanctified by his own blood, and made perfect through sufferings, by which he learned obedience, though he was the Son of God.

The different parts of their function is the last thing that demands our attention. "Every high priest taken from among men," in the manner above described, "is ordained for men in things pertaining unto God, and to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin."* This, indeed, was the most distinguish-

* Heb. v. 1.

ing part of their office, and fundamental to all other functions that are appropriated to them. However, they were also appointed to bless the people; to pray for them; to instruct them in the knowledge of the divine will; to oversee the service of the tabernacle; to blow the trumpets both in peace and war; and to judge betwixt the clean and the unclean. But we see Jesus our High Priest, giving himself an offering and a sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour, more grateful unto God, and more appeasing to his incensed justice, than all the victims that ever smoaked in the worldly sanctuary, or than all the gifts that ever were presented there, or than all the incense that ever fumed from the golden censer. Put off your robes, ye legal priesthood, your work is finished, your office entirely supersceded. What ye could not do by multiplied obligations, Jesus Christ has done by one sacrifice. The vail is now rent, and the temple now destroyed. The shadow has given place to the substance. Perhaps it was not without a mystic signification, that Zacharias, a priest of Aaron's order, and the father of John the harbinger of Christ, was struck dumb when officiating in the temple, so that he could not speak unto the people when he came forth of the holy place. Might it not be a silent omen, that a dispensation was now commencing in the days of Messiah, wherein none of Aaron's order should open their mouths any more to bless the people, saying, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face to shine

upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.* Jesus is that priest whom God hath sent to bless us; who prays for his people; whose lips keep knowledge to instruct us in the will of God.—Jesus is that priest who oversees the service of the tabernacle, being head over all things to the church, which is his body. Jesus is that priest who now blows the great trumpet of the gospel, and who shall descend shortly from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, to gather the congregation of the righteous. Then all who have him not for their priest, to wash and sprinkle them with hyssop and blood, shall have him for their priest to pronounce them utterly unclean.

9. THE HISTORY OF JOSHUA.

THE names of Joshua and Jesus are scarcely more like than their atchievements. This captain, so famous in the sacred history, was nominated to be the successor of Moses, and ordained by God's command, to his high post, in the presence of all the congregation of Israel. He received the name of Joshua before, when sent to spy out the land, his former name being Oshea: and he is the first of the typical persons who was called by the very name, by which, in future ages, a greater Saviour than he, was commonly known. Perhaps it

* Numb. vi. 24. 25.

was not without its meaning, that he was the servant before he was the successor of Moses; for it might signify, that our Jesus was first to become the servant of the law, before he should abolish it. But passing this, let us take a more particular notice of the most memorable passages of that marvelous campaign.

And the first thing that presents itself to our view, is his passing the Jordan which was miraculously driven back, to afford a safe passage to the chosen people. In this river, God was pleased, for the first time, to magnify his servant Joshua in the sight of all the tribes of Israel; and in this river it pleased God to give the first most public testimony to Jesus Christ, when the heavens seemed to open at his baptism, and the Holy Ghost descended in the likeness of a dove, and a voice from the excellent glory proclaimed his high character. But the chief thing to be observed here, is the resemblance betwixt the passage of Israel over Jordan into the promised land, under the conduct of Joshua, and the passage of all the redeemed through death, into the heavenly inheritance. Long had they traversed the vast and howling wilderness, the haunt of ravenous beasts, and poisonous serpents, where their hearts, many a time, were like to faint for thirst and hunger; but now the land, flowing with milk and honey, receives them, and their wanderings, in the pathless desert, are forever ended.—Though Jordan overflows his banks, their march is

not obstructed. O powerful presence of JEHOVAH! The sea saw it, and fled, and Jordan was driven back.* And now they have taken their farewell of the weary wilderness; we hear no more of the miraculous cloud that conducted them, nor of the manna that fed them forty years. Such is the safety of all true Israelites, when marching to their promised rest, under the conduct of the Captain of their salvation. Death is the Jordan through which they pass, from the wilderness of this world into the blissful regions of immortality. But when they pass through these waters, they shall not overflow them; for he who dries up the waters of the sea by his rebuke, will be graciously present with them, till they gain the safe shore of Immanuel's land. Then shall the ordinances be discontinued, and the Bible superseded, which are so necessary in their wandering state, to support their lives, and guide their paths; as the cloud vanished, and the manna staid, when the fine wheat of Canaan supplied the Israelites with food, according to the promise. It is not Moses, but Joshua, who leads through Jordan.—Jesus, thou art the only conquerer of death. What will they do when they come to the swellings of Jordan, who are not under thy auspicious conduct? Thanks be to God who gives us this victory over death, not through Moses, or the law, but through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Twelve stones are left by the Hebrew captain, as a memorial of this great de-

* Ps. cxiv. 3.

liverance; and twelve apostles were appointed by the Captain of our salvation, to be witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of Jews, and in Jerusalem.

From the banks of Jordan, let us now come to the walls of Jericho, the accursed city. Never was town or garrison besieged in such a manner before or since. No mounts are raised; no battering-rams are applied to the walls; no attempts are made to sap the foundations; but by the direction of the Lord of hosts, the army marches in silent parade round the walls. Their martial music is not the sound of their silver trumpets, but of ram-horns, blown by their priests. Ridiculous, weak, and foolish, as this new method of assault might seem to the unbelieving sinners of Jericho, they soon found, that the weakness of God is stronger than men, and that the most contemptible means, when God ordains them, shall gain their end, in spite of all opposition. What ailed thee, O sea, that thou fleddest? Jordan, that thou wast driven back?* and ye walls of Jericho, that ye fell flat to the ground, when compassed seven days? It was not owing to the sword of Israel, nor even to the sound of the trumpets, but to the power of Israel's God, accompanying this feeble mean prescribed for the trial of their faith, and proof of their obedience. For, O the power of faith! had their walls threatened the clouds, and been harder than adamant, firmer than brass, down must they tumble on

* Psal. cxiv 5.

the evening of the seventh day. Thus are the strongholds of sin, and every high thing that exalts itself against the New Testament Joshua, cast down by the mighty weapons of the Christian warfare, which are not carnal. The feeble voice of the gospel, when faithfully preached, though not with a silver sound, or with excellency of speech, shall be mighty, through God, to triumph over all opposition: so it was in the days of the apostles; so it has been in every distant age; and so it shall be, till the victory is complete. Thus, Babylon, shall thy proud towers be levelled with the ground, though seemingly fearless of assault. For the day of the Lord shall be on every high wall, and on every one that is proud and lifted up.* Though the kings of the earth should give their strength to the beast, our Joshua shall prevail, by the foolishness of preaching, and the sound of the gospel-trumpet; and at the appointed time the strong-lunged angel shall cry, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.†

The saving of Rahab and her household is the next remarkable occurrence. Who would have expected to find, in this city of destruction, even a strong believer, whose faith should be celebrated by one apostle, and her works by another? and who should have also the honor to make one of that illustrious line, from whence the Messiah should arise? But so it was. Though once a notorious sinner, and called Rahab the harlot, to this day; yet

* Is. ii. 12. † Rev. xiv. 8.

she was a believer of the promise that God made to Israel, and proved, by her works, that her faith was genuine: for protecting the messengers of Joshua, at the hazard of her life, she preferred the interests of the church of God to those of her country, which she knew very well was impossible to be saved.—Though we can by no means justify the dissimulation by which she saved the spies from the pursevants of the king of Jericho; yet, as God has forgiven her for being once a harlot and a liar, so must we also forgive those blameable parts of her conduct, of which she has long since truly repented.—Well does Joshua answer his name, in saving not the race of Israel only, but Rahab, though a cursed Canaanite, with all her household, though sinners of the Gentiles. Was it not a dark prelude of Jesus Christ, our better Joshua, his saving the Gentile world from the wrath to come, as well as the preserved of Jacob? Might it not portend, that publicans and harlots, and such notorious sinners, should be received among the first into his heavenly kingdom? and that the harlot Gentiles, who formerly were serving divers lusts, and living in the most abominable idolatries, should be incorporated into the holy society of the church, and espoused as a chaste bride to Jesus Christ, as Rahab became a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and the wife of Naasson, an illustrious prince in the chief of their tribes? Perhaps the scarlet thread, which, at the direction of the spies, she hung forth of her window,

as a discriminating signal, by which all under her roof were exempted from the dismal desolation; perhaps, I say, it might be an intimation, though a very obscure one, that the shedding of Christ's red blood should prove the means of salvation to the Gentile world, and of making peace betwixt the Jews and them, who were formerly at variance, and harboured mutual hatred. Red was the colour of salvation to Israel in Egypt, when the sprinkling their doors with blood protected them from the destroying angel's sword; and red is the colour of salvation to Rahab in Canaan, when the hanging a scarlet thread over her windows was her security from the destroying sword of Israel. Happy they who have the blood of Christ upon them, not for destruction, (as the Jews who murdered him, and imprecated this dreadful vengeance on themselves, and their posterity), but for salvation, (as all them who believe). Rahab's safety was confirmed by the oath of men; but theirs by the oath of God, for whom it is impossible to lie. Destruction approaches not these doors; death enters not these windows where the blood of Christ is found.

In vain did the kings of Canaan conspire to oppose the victorious Joshua after the destruction of Jericho; for at last he bids his captains set their feet upon the necks of the hostile princes, in token of full conquest. Nor was it strange he should be able to do this, when the very heavens befriended him, by casting down prodigious hailstones to kill

his flying enemies; and their most glorious luminaries, the sun and moon, were obedient to his voice, and stood still in their habitation, till the vengeance written was executed upon the devoted nations. Such is that complete victory over all the enemies of God and his people, which he shall gain who goes forth conquering, and to conquer. It is the distinguished honour of all his faithful soldiers to tread upon the devil, the world, and the lusts of the flesh. These are the dragons and the lions which they trample under their feet; these are the kings they bind with chains; these are the nations they shall dash in shivers as a potter's vessel with a rod of iron. And a time is coming, when the upright shall have dominion over the wicked; for so is his will, whom not only the sun and moon, but all the numerous hosts of heaven and earth obey.

At last the favoured nation of the Jews are brought into their promised rest, under the conduct of their valiant general. He puts them in quiet possession of that happy country which he had before spied out for them. This Moses could not do. So Jesus Christ hath introduced us, not into a temporal rest, like thine, O Joshua, but into a spiritual and eternal rest, an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, which the law could not do, having become weak through the flesh.

10. THE HISTORY OF SAMSON.

LET us now glance at the prodigious feats of Samson, that mighty and renowned judge of

Israel, whose birth, life, and death, were all so extraordinary, that, as some suppose, the fabulous tales of Hercules, so famous in Greece, are but this true history metamorphosed, and dashed with fiction. It may indeed seem odd to insert a person, whose vices were so glaring and unmanly, in the catalogue of the illustrious types of Jesus Christ; for the hints of his religious and saintly disposition in the history of the Judges, are so dubious and sparing, that one would be tempted to suspect whether he was a saint at all. But the honourable character he was vested with by God, and the signal deliverances of his people he was enabled to atchieve, afford us more than a presumption, that he was not wholly a stranger to the fear of the Lord. Above all, his reputation as a believer, is firmly established by a New Testament writer, who ranks him among the eminent worthies, who lived and died in faith; who by faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopt the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.* Be it so, that, on account of the criminal weakness of his mind, which wrought his own destruction, he is rather a figure of the sinner; yet if we consider the prodigious strength of his body, which wrought salvation in Israel, he is justly esteemed a figure of the Saviour.

* Heb. xi. 33. 34.

The circumstances of his birth so much resemble those of Jesus Christ's, that we can scarcely pass them over in silence. Both Jesus Christ and he were conceived in an extraordinary manner beside the course of nature; their birth, and future importance, were declared, by a messenger from the invisible world to their female parents, that they should be Nazarites unto God, and saviours of Israel. Only whereas Samson's mother was but a barren spouse, the mother of Jesus was an unspotted virgin. The angel that appeared to Manoah's wife refused to tell his name when importuned; but the angel who appeared to the wife of Joseph, declared who he was without being asked. Samson was but a legal Nazarite from the womb, and many a time he seems to have acted a part very unworthy of such a sacred name; but Jesus Christ was that in substance, which Samson, and other Nazarites, were only in shadow; holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners;* purer than snow, whiter than milk, more ruddy in body than rubies, his polishing was of sapphire.† He was, during his whole life, dedicated to the service of God, abstracted from the affairs of the world, denied to the gratifications of sense, and pure from all uncleanness. And, lastly, that the resemblance betwixt him, and that religious order, might be more complete, whereas, at the expiring of their vow, they were obliged, by the divine law, to offer as ma-

* Heb. vii. 26. † Lam. iv. 7.

ny sacrifices as though they had been lepers, even though they had fully complied with all their restrictions ;—so Jesus Christ, that he might fully pay his vow to the mighty God of Jacob, offered himself a sacrifice, though he had no sin of his own to be expiated. And perhaps it is more than a conjecture, that his education in the village of Nazareth, which occasioned his being called a Nazarene, in the common stile of his country, was intended, in the secret providence of God, to be an intimation to all, that he was the true Nazarite, in whom the ancient laws of Nazariteship were to receive their end : and thus, according to a holy evangelist, it was fulfilled that is written in the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarine.*

We shall now come to take notice of some of the most singular actions of this illustrious Danite, which are as uncommon as his extraordinary birth presaged. Whether his marriage with a Philistine was any dark figure of the calling of the Gentiles, I will not determine. But his encounter with the young lion that roared against him, when he had no defensive weapon in his hand, in which he was victorious, (a prelude of his future victories), seems not unlike that first prelusive battle our Redeemer had with the roaring lion of hell, who met him in the wilderness, and roared against him by three most hideous temptations, but was totally routed and overcome by the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

* Matt. ii. 23.

Hail Son of the Most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save mankind.

MILTON.

And whereas the dead carcase of the lion is recorded to have become a hive of bees, who, by some strange instinct, chose here to make their honey; this may at least put us in mind, what are the happy effects of the conquests of our Redeemer. The law roared against him by its threatenings; but he overcame it by his complete satisfaction. Death roared against him, and thought to swallow him; but O death! he was thy plague. Be not afraid of the condemning law, ye that believe in the Son of God; tremble not at the thoughts of death! These roaring lions are quelled by your almighty Redeemer, who has seen the travel of his soul, and is satisfied, as Samson did eat of the honey which he found in the carcase; and who also invites his people to partake with him in his repast, as it is said, Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.*——To have beheld a flight of eagles alighted on the carrion, would been no uncommon occurrence; for where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.† But for bees to take up their quarters in a dead carcase, and there to deposite their delicious stores, is so unlike the natural disposition of these clean and prudent insects, as to afford the matter of that famous riddle which this great champion propounded to his friends, on occa-

* Is. lv. 2. † Matt. xxiv. 28.

sion of this extraordinary adventure, and of which they were not able to guess the meaning, till, according to the proverb then used, they ploughed with his heifer. That swarms of Christians should be associated together, and live by the death of Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, whose flesh is meat indeed; that glory should come to us by his dishonour, riches by his poverty, strength by his weakness, life by his death; that the most unlikely means should bring about the most glorious and beneficial ends; that our most terrible enemies should be meat for us; that what promises nothing but stench and putrefaction, should yield sweet comfort & refreshment; these are the things, which, by the gospel, are declared unto us. Here, Samson, thy riddle unfolds itself, which none can understand aright who plough not with God's heifer; that is, the Spirit of God, who searcheth all things, and reveals what the natural man receiveth not, nor knows.

It was strange the Israelites did not join together, under such a redoubted champion, to shake off the shameful yoke of the Philistines. But they were so lost to all sense of shame and gratitude, as to treat the deliverer of their country like the betrayer of it. They bind (by his own consent) their judge and avenger, and traitorously deliver him to their tyrants and oppressors. But their joy was short in their prisoner. For bursting their bands, and casting away their cords, with a very contemptible weapon, he deals death and desolation at every blow,

and makes a most terrible carnage. For the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and strung his arm with more than mortal vigour; and the promise was literally fulfilled, That one should chase a thousand.* Even so, the avenger of the human race, the Lord Jesus Christ, was basely delivered up by his own countrymen, who had received many favours from him, into the hands of the Gentiles.—But without his own consent, Judas, with all his rout, could not have bound him. O Saviour of the world! thy love to men, and obedience to God, were the invisible but mighty cords that held thee fast. These, and not the nails that transfixed thy hands and feet, hindered thee to save thyself, and come down from the cross. But the triumphing of the wicked was short; for when they vainly imagined they had him sure and safe, fastened to a cross, and laid in the grave, he starts up a dreadful adversary, the cords of death are not able to hold him; out of weakness he is made strong; and though all nations compassed him, yet in the name of the Lord he did destroy them. And how contemptible was the instrument he used in this mighty work! As when Samson, who wanted not spears and swords, was directed to use no other weapon but the jaw-bone of an ass; so Jesus Christ, who could have commanded the secular arm to spread the conquests of his gospel, or have ordained strength out of the mouths of eloquent orators, and profound

* Josh. xxiii. 10.

philosophers ; yet chose contemptible fishermen, and perfected praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.

I might mention, in the next place, his marvellous escape from Gaza, where he was watched all night by his enemies; but he eluded their vigilance, and unhinging their massy gates, he took away upon his shoulders part of the battlements of that strong city, for they were not the Lord's, and carried them to the top of a hill, the enemies having no power either to resist or to pursue. An emblem of our mighty Saviour sleeping in the chamber of the grave, where he was watched by the jealous scribes and Pharisees, who vainly imagined to hinder his resurrection. But when they least expected, he arose ; he burst the gates of death ; and leading captivity captive, he ascended on high.

But the manner in which he died is perhaps what most entitles him to be the type of Jesus Christ, who, like Samson, was betrayed, and sold by a pretended friend, bound, blindfolded, insulted, and made his grave with the wicked. Like Samson, he willingly resigned his breath ; but by his death, death was abolished, principalities and powers were spoiled, and, O ye enemies of salvation, destructions have a perpetual end. Thy death, O Jesus, is our life, and by thy cross we triumph over these wicked lusts that have shorn the locks of our strength ; have bound us with fetters of iron ; have put out the eyes of our mind, and made us dwell in darkness, and

toil at the abhorred drudgery of the devil. Happy they who are avenged of these cruel enemies, though like thee, O Samson, they should die with them.

11. THE HISTORY OF DAVID.

THERE is scarcely a more amiable and consummate character to be found in the compass of sacred history than David's, notwithstanding some blemishes with which it is tarnished.—What mouth is not opened in the praises of this good king, the first of the kind that swayed the Jewish sceptre, who is honoured to be the penman of these devout and rapturous compositions, stiled the Psalms, where the graces of poetry strive with the beauties of holiness, and which are justly esteemed the treasure of the world, and a complete system of revelation in miniature? When we consider that fervant devotion, that submission to the divine will, that delight in God's law, and zeal for his worship, that spirit of forgiveness in the case of personal injuries, and the other lovely graces that breathe through all his writings and history, we must certainly allow him to have been a saint of the first magnitude. But it is chiefly to be observed, to the honour of this illustrious king, so much talked of in the Bible, that he was at once a prophet, a progenitor, and a figure of the Messiah. The last particular is so evident from innumerable places, where

David and his Lord exchange not only words and speeches, but also names, that taking for granted this obvious truth, we shall briefly hint at the most remarkable parallels betwixt them.

Perhaps his very name David, which signifies beloved, may intimate, that Christ his antitype should be the beloved of God and of men. But it is certain the place of his birth was always held to be the same where Christ should be born. Might not this be one reason why David (who was a prophet, and knew that himself was a type of Christ, and that he should be born in the same village) discovered such a fondness for Bethlehem, as to be seized with ardent longing, even for a draught of water from its well? Much was this little village aggrandized, by giving birth to king David, but more by giving birth to Jesus Christ: for so the prophet sings; "But thou Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler of Israel, whose goings forth have been of old from everlasting."

From the place of his birth, let us come to the qualifications of his person, both in body and mind. The ruddiness of his complexion is very particularly noticed by the sacred historian. And besides the comeliness of his person, his prudence and valour recommended him at court, when he had no higher title than the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite. But above all, his character is crowned by that most

ample commendation God was pleased to give him when he removed Saul, I have found a man after mine own heart, that shall fulfil all my will.* And where shall these illustrious endowments be found in their highest perfection but in the person of the Son of David, who is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousands, fairer than the children of men, the mighty God, the prudent servant of the Lord; and, lastly, who came to do thy will, O God, thy law was in the midst of his heart?†

Let us next compare their sufferings, and we shall find a surprising resemblance. We might, first, take notice of his lurking in obscurity, for a long time in his father's house, where he tended the flocks of sheep, before he was a shepherd of men.—But though the like obscurity was the fate of Jesus Christ for a long track of years, when he dwelt in his father's house; perhaps it is not so proper to mention this particular under the head of David's afflictions; for we can scarce doubt but it was the most happy period of his whole life, when he followed the ewes with young. From the time he began to attract the observation of the world, what was the greatest part of his life but a continual war? His own brother made him a very surly speech, to deter him from his first public adventure in encountering Goliah, insinuating, that the sole motive he had in visiting the camp at that juncture, was pride and naughtiness of heart. Which puts us in mind of

* Acts xiii. 22. † Ps. xl. 8.

the coarse reception our gracious Redeemer met with from his brethren according to the flesh, who received him not, but loaded him with the most odious imputation, and virulent reproaches, and always put the worst constructions upon his words and actions. We are also told, that some of his nearest relations believed not on him.——And as to the persecutions he endured under the tyrant-reign of Saul, (which were the occasion of many sweet psalms, transmitted even to our times), the likeness betwixt them and those of Jesus Christ, under the tyrant-reign of Herod, is greater than one would think at first view. David's life is sought after by his own king: and what was the quarrel? It was the fear that David would succeed to the crown, as was revealed to the prophet Samuel: so Jesus Christ is persecuted by Herod king of Judea, from a foolish supposition, that he could elude the high decrees of Heaven, and falsify the scriptures of the prophets. In David's quarrel the innocent priests in Nob were cruelly butchered; and the innocent babes in Bethlehem in the cause of Jesus Christ.—Cursed be their anger, for it was cruel.* But both the bloody tyrants shared the same success: for as all attempts to seize the person of David were vain; so Herod's bloody plot against the life of Christ proved abortive. But when we are remembering David, and all his afflictions, we must not forget that very singular one which befel him, when he was

* Gen. xlix. 7.

compelled, by an unnatural son, and rebellious subjects, to fly from his royal city; and, with his sorrowful friends, passed over the brook Kidron in a melancholy plight. It was over this same brook the Son and Lord of David passed to that fatal garden where he was apprehended, in company with his sorrowful apostles. And what was no small addition to David's distress, his own familiar friend, in whom he confided, and servant that ate of his bread, played the traitor, and lift up his heel against him: a circumstance which was not wanting in the case of Jesus Christ, betrayed by one of his apostles. Who knows not that the same scriptures are applied to Judas in the New Testament, that are in the Old spoken of Ahithophel? Let his habitation be desolate, and let another take his office.* It is true, the Son of David knew from the beginning who should betray him, which David knew not: but in other respects the parallel is very near; for both these cursed traitors were alike in their former character and trust, alike in their execrable villainy, and alike in their tragical end.

Having enumerated some of David's typical afflictions, let us come to his renowned atchievements both in war and peace, wherein also he seems to have been designed an emblem of the same glorious person. His victory over that proud insulting Philistine who defied the armies of the living God, is none of the least exploits for which he stands recorded in

* Ps. cix. 8 Acts i. 20.

the rolls of fame. He heard his blasphemous railing; he saw the unmanly terror of the Israelites, who all declined the single combat of this vain boaster; he was informed of the great rewards the victor should receive from the king; and not in the least intimidated by his fierce appearance, he resolves to accept the challenge, in the name of the insulted God of Israel. Armed with no weapons but his staff and sling, he lays the vaunting warrior prostrate in death; adding withal this indignity to his huge corpse, of severing his head from his body with his own sword.—Let the vaunting Goliah be an emblem of the devil, who has the power of death.

A great reward is proposed by the King of Heaven to the person who shall encounter and overcome this formidable enemy. No man, no angel, dared the arduous enterprise. But Jesus Christ descending to visit his brethren, and see our camp, moved with a becoming zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of the human race, and for the joy that was set before him, prepares himself for the mortal combat. His brethren indeed dispised him, and used him rudely, but he was not detered from his merciful design. He borrowed no armour from us, for he only partook of our infirm fleshy nature: but by his own strength and wisdom he obtained the victory with the staff of his cross; a most unlikely weapon! for God was his shield and glory, and the lifter up of his head. "By death," which was like the devil's sword, "he destroyed him that had the

power of death:"* and the saying of the prophet is fulfilled, I will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, nor by horses, nor by horsemen.† We might also observe, how his taking the strong-hold of Zion from the Jebusites might be an emblem of Christ's conquering the Gentile church. His desiring to find a place for the God of Jacob to rest in may be considered in the same light. This, O Saviour! was thy gracious design in visiting our regions of mortality, to find a place of rest among the sinful race of men, for that God, whose throne is the highest Heaven, and his footstool the earth;—to find not a shadowy rest upon an earthly mountain, or in a material structure, but a real, a glorious, an everlasting rest in the temple of thy body the church, that God the Lord might dwell forever among them.

Great was the glory to which the king of Israel was raised from small beginnings; and the prudence of his administration, when he was lifted out of the dust, proved him not to have been unworthy of such high dinity. It is true, we must allow him to have committed no small errors in some particular acts of government; but as to the main of his conduct, he received this honourable testimony, He fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.‡ Even so the humble Saviour, who might truly say, Mine heart is not haughty, O Lord, neither are mine eyes lofty,§

* Heb. ii. 14. † Hos. i. 7. ‡ Psal. lxxviii. 72. § Ps. cxxxi. 1.

was exalted from his state of low debasement to the highest pinnacle of glory, to become not only the head of his church, but of the Heathen; and the people who know him not, are made to serve his will. But in this he far excels the type, that the annals of his reign are not stained with any the smallest blots, and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.*

We shall but mention, in the last place, the covenant of royalty which God was pleased to make with David and his seed for ever; an emblem of that covenant which God hath made with Christ, as the representative of his chosen people. This covenant, O David, was thy consolation in all thy family-trials, and under the melancholy apprehensions of thy successor's apostacy. O may it also be our consolation! and let all the children of Zion be joyful in their king!

12. THE HISTORY OF SOLOMON.

THE next illustrious personage we shall mention is Solomon the son of David; the wise, wealthy, magnificent, and peaceful monarch of Jerusalem, who, like his father, was honoured to be the penman of a very considerable and useful part of the inspired writings, by which he may be justly reckoned to have made abundant compensation to the church of God, for the great offence he was left to give to all good men, by the sad apostacy of his advanced years. That he was a figure of the Messiah, seems evident

* Isa. ix. 7.

from what God said concerning him by the prophet Nathan, which is applied by a New Testament writer to Jesus Christ,—I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son;*——from what David said in the seventy-second psalm;——and from the most excellent Song of Songs composed by himself, not concerning himself, but Jesus Christ, the glorious Bridegroom of the church, under a borrowed name. Nor is it difficult to find out several things in Solomon's character and history, that greatly resemble the character and history of a far greater person than he.

We shall first take notice of that wisdom and sagacity for which he was so much celebrated. It pleased God to confer upon this beloved king a very uncommon measure of intellectual endowments, to fit him for discharging the high office to which he was raised. He asked wisdom from God as the best and most perfect gift: nor did he ask in vain; for God gave him a wise and understanding heart, as never monarch had before. His wisdom far excelled that of the most renowned sages of his time. The world of nature was all his own. He spake of plants and animals, from the triumphant ceder down to the humble moss; and from the soaring eagle to the creeping insect. As a scholar no question was too hard for him to resolve; and as a judge, no case too intricate to decide. The wisdom of his proverbial sayings, and the sublimity of his poetical composi-

* Heb. i. 5.

tions, may be most certainly inferred from those specimens which have reached our times. He was not only revered as the oracle of his country, but even princes, neigbouring and remote, courted his friendship, and were ambitious of his acquaintance. His very servants that ministered unto him, were pronounced happy by a great queen, who, fired with the love of wisdom, undertook a long and expensive journey, leaving for a time the delights of her court, and the cares of state, to pay him a visit, of whom she had heard so much, though still, as she afterwards acknowledged, the half had not been told her: therefore shall she rise up in judgment against the men in every generation, who refuse to hear the wisdom, and receive the insruction of a greater than Solomon, who is the wisdom of God itself, and in whom are hid treasures, all treasures of wisdom and knowledge; who, instead of waiting till we come to seek him, has come from Heaven to us, and cries in the chief places of concourse, in the openings of the gates, in the city he uttereth his words, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and fools hate knowledge? turn you at my reproof.*— What was thy wisdom, Solomon, to his on whom, as the prophet testifies, the Spirit of the Lord did rest, the Spirit of wisdom, counsel, and knowledge, to make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord? Admire we the vast extent of Solomon's erudition? There is no creature that is not manifest

* Prov. i. 23.

in the sight of Jesus Christ, from the greatest unto the least. It is recorded of him, that with the utmost facility he answered the hard questions that were put to him. Neither can the wisdom of Jesus Christ be nonplussed to answer the most puzzling query, when that most difficult of any has been resolved by him, Wherewith shall a guilty sinner come before the Lord? and how shall he bow himself before the high God?* Was Solomon an accute penetrating judge, judging his people with righteousness, and his poor with judgment? Of Christ it was declared, He shall not judge after the seeing of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.† He discerns at first view a Nathaniel and a Judas, and will separate the righteous and the wicked.—And what are the wise speeches of Solomon to those of Jesus Christ, by whose Spirit the whole scriptures were dictated, and Solomon himself inspired?

To the wisdom, let us subjoin the wealth of Solomon, who made even silver in Jerusalem as the stones of the street. But how shall this agree to our Lord Jesus, who was himself a poor man, without a fixed dwelling-place, and whose followers most generally are the poor among men? True indeed, he neither possessed the riches of the world himself, nor can his subjects boast, that they have

* Micah vi. 6. † Is. xi. 3.

emassed huge quantities of white and yellow earth, called silver and gold: yet are thy riches, Lord Jesus, unsearchable; eternity itself too short to count them. The arithmetic of angels would not be able to cast the mighty sum. These riches hast thou purchased by thy poverty; and what is said of money we still more truly affirm of thy inexaustable fullness, It answers all things.* If Solomon made silver as the stones; Jesus Christ renders the most admired vanities of the world but loss and dung.—O the immense value of the riches of Christ! of whom it is said in the prophet, For brass I will bring gold, for iron silver, for wood brass, and for stones iron.† Even such amazing wealth is scarcely fit to be an emblem of the true riches; for a New Testament writer rises in the description, talks of a city whose inhabitants are kings, whose walls are jasper, whose gates are pearls, whose streets are paved with gold. Here that precious metal on which the men of the world set their hearts, is trodden with the feet. How diminutive is the splendour of earthly courts! how despicable is a Solomon, though seated on his ivory throne, in comparison of such stupenduous magnificence; which never indeed existed in the world of nature, but has a true, though spiritual existence in the kingdom of Jesus Christ! To conclude then, as the wisdom of Solomon was but folly to the wisdom of Jesus Christ; so, in comparison of his riches, his wealth was poverty.

* Eccl. x. 19. † Is. lx. 17.

From his wisdom and wealth, let us come to the extent of his dominion, which we are told was very wide. And if, in the multitude of people, is the king's honour, the king Messiah equals, nay, far excels the king of Israel. What was it to reign over all kingdoms from the Euphrates to the midland sea, and to the corner of Egypt, to his extensive sway, whose kingdom rules over all?

But what was a most singular recommendation of Solomon's happy reign, for the most part it was not disturbed, either with civil jars or foreign war; for, as his name imported, he was a man of rest, and, except toward the latter end of his days, his subjects enjoyed the most profound tranquility. This was designed to be a faint representation of the government of the Prince of peace; whose gospel is a doctrine, which, if sincerely believed, effectually reconciles men to God, and to one another. Therefore the ancient prophets, speaking of these peaceful times when Messiah should reign, have collected the most striking and amiable images of peace that can well be conceived. They talk of nations beating their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks;—that arts of death and mutual destruction shall no more be learned as a useful science;—that the most ravenous beasts shall be as tame as those with which mankind are most familiar; that the most invenomed serpent shall cease to be pernicious;—that bows and swords, and such like instruments of death, shall cease out of the

earth, and the odious din of battle shall be heard no more. If now these charming prophecies have not received their full accomplishment, our wars and fightings, O Prince of peace! are not the native result of thy gospel, but they come from the lusts that war in our members. To this original may they all be traced. O shame to men, who are called by the Christian name, to act a part so unlike their sacred profession, by waging horrid wars with one another, and rejoicing in mutual slaughter to make their swords drunk with blood! Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, expect more happy times, when the import of these predictions shall be more fully known, and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. For here indeed the order is inverted in Solomon and his antitype. Whereas the beginning of Solomon's administration was the most peaceable part of it, the latter end of the Messiah's government shall be the most serene and happy period.

To pass over the foreign match of the Israelitish monarch, which some have supposed a prelude of calling the Gentile church to the fellowship of Jesus Christ; we shall only take notice of the magnificence of Solomon's building. He was pitched upon by the great God to build a house for his name; and, under his direction, that sacred structure was reared at an immense charge. The workmen were foreigners, and many of the materials fetched from abroad. The stones being all prepared and fitted

to each other before-hand, the noise of hammers was not heard as the building advanced. Who knows not, that the ancient temple was a figure of the church which is his body? Christ Jesus is the true Solomon, who builds this holy and beautiful house, not with dead, but with living stones, which are hewed by the law, and polished by the gospel; and being thus fitly framed, they become a spiritual building, and grow into a holy temple in the Lord. Even sinners of the Gentiles are employed in this honourable work of building up the church; and of them it may be said, Ye are God's building.* The doctrine of the apostles and prophets is the foundation, and Jesus Christ himself the chief corner-stone.

13. THE HISTORY OF JONAH.

THE comparison which our Lord was pleased to make of himself and the prophet Jonah, when an evil and adulterous generation sought after a sign from Heaven, forbids us to pass over in silence this short, but strange history, which is doubtless one of these passages in the Old Testament to which the apostle refers, when he speaks of Christ's dying for our sins, according to the scriptures, and being buried and rising again the third day, according to the scriptures: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so was the Son of man three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,†

* 1 Cor. iii. 9. † Matt. xii. 40.

That we may have the fuller view of the resemblance, let us briefly recollect what we are told of the prophet in the book denominated from him. He is charged with a commission by the great God to denounce the vengeance of Heaven against the great and sinful city Nineveh, the metropolis of the mighty Assyrian empire. This is the first time we read of a prophet sent to reform a Gentile nation; and doubtless was a prelude of his granting to the Gentiles, in future times, repentence unto life. It was God who commanded, and the prophet ought to have been all submission. But as Simon the son of Jonas long after disputed the command of God when he was sent for the first time to preach unto the Gentiles; so Jonas, though a prophet of the Lord, who ought to have known better things, resolves to play the fugitive, and, like Cain, to go out from the presence of the Lord, and be an exile from the church where God was worshipped, expecting to hear no more such troublesome orders from above, if he was once on some foreign ground. He finds at Joppa a ship bound for Tarshish; and thinking it a fair opportunity of carrying his scheme in execution, he enters himself a passenger. But, ye mariners, little did you think what a dangerous cargo you were taking on board; for soon a tempest from the Lord embroils the ocean, and death sits threatening on every wave. Every mariner betakes himself to his prayers; but Jonas, the cause of the storm, is fast asleep. He is season-

ably reproved by the master of the ship for his untimely security, and earnestly invited to join with them in calling also upon his God. A good advice to be sure: but, alas! Jonas' heart condemned him; and though his God was the God of gods, he had little ground to hope that his prayer would be heared. Alas! the guilty person was most unfit to become a mediator for the rest of the crew.—They rightly judged, that this preternatural storm was sent by angry Heaven to punish some notorious offender; it was put into their hearts to find out, by lot, who he was. And, O surprising! a professor of the true religion, and a prophet of the Lord, is singled out, in a crew of Heathen sailors, as the greatest sinner in the ship. His iniquity, which he thought to have kept a profound secret, is revealed in the most public manner; and himself is obliged to confess his crime at large, that being a servant and prophet of the God who made Heaven and earth, and the sea, and the dry land, he had presumed to fly his presence, and disobey his positive command. What shall they do? Their case seems desperate. They ask his counsel, whom they now esteemed a prophet. And, though at the expense of his life, he gives them the best direction could be thought of,—to cast himself forth into the sea. But though he was willing to die, the good-natured mariners were not willing to put him to death, till they had exerted their utmost efforts to save themselves and him. Till at last they found their labour vain,

and with great reluctance they heaved over-board the guilty prophet, having first fervantly deprecated the guilt of his blood. And now the criminal they demanded, being surrendered to the ocean, the tempest ceased to roar, and the billows laid aside their rage; which had such a good effect upon the mariners, as, it is hoped, they proved sincere worshippers of the true God, whom the winds and seas obeyed. Who would expect to hear of Jonas any more? But, strange to say! a huge fish, which the great Creator had commanded to be ready, receives the astonished prophet into its belly, where he lives three days and three nights, being supported by an almighty power. In this dreary mansion he finds time to meditate his past folly, and cry unto the Lord in the language of sincere repentence. And after he had been sufficiently punished, the obedient fish returns him safe and sound on the dry land on the third day. The commission is renewed; and wiser than before, he obeys; goes to Ninevah, and preaches the doctrine of repentance; threatening them with destruction in forty days. The men of Ninevah repent; and God also delays to strike the blow, and repented him of the evil.

But what we intend chiefly to observe in the whole of this uncommon transaction; A greater than Jonas is here pointed forth in his death, burial, resurrection, and preaching to the Gentiles.

The casting forth of Jonah into the sea, bears no small resemblance to the death of Christ, though

in some circumstances there is a considerable difference: for the prophet Jonah was, for his own offences, delivered into the hands of mariners, who, without being guilty of murder, or thirst after his blood, did, with great reluctance, throw him overboard for their own preservation; earnestly beseeching that his blood might not be laid unto their charge: but Jesus Christ being delivered, not for his own, but our offences, unto the Jews and Gentiles, was taken, crucified, and slain with wicked hands; while his bloody murderers imprecated the direful vengeance of his innocent blood to be on them and their children. In other respects the case of Christ and Jonas was more alike. With his own consent the prophet is cast forth into the sea, after he had acknowledged that himself was the man for whose cause the storm was sent, and whom the angry ocean demanded; so Jesus Christ laid down his life in the most voluntary manner, and boldly offered himself to the multitude who were sent to apprehend him, saying, I am the man whom ye seek; and if ye seek me, let these go their way.* And as the sufferings of the prophet, who was plunged into the ocean, were attended with the most happy consequences, the stilling of the tempest, the preservation of the lives of the sailors, and, as is hoped, the salvation of their souls; even so, when Jesus the Son of God expired on the cross, this event, though in appearance tragical, was productive of the most

* John xviii. 8.

blessed effects, appeasing the tempest of God's anger, and saving from destruction the many for whom he gave his life a ransom, some of whom were the instruments of his death.

His lodging in the belly of the fish three days and nights, most certainly corresponds to the burial of our Redeemer in the grave, a part of three natural days. Never did that monster of the deep swallow such a morsel before. Nor did ever the grave enclose such a prisoner as Jesus was. Jonah, it is true, was not really dead, as Christ was when in the heart of the earth: but as that dismal place of darkness and corruption did much resemble the gloomy horrors of the loathsome grave, and is even stiled the belly of hell by the prophet himself; perhaps the circumstance of Jonah's being alive in that living sepulchre, may put us in mind, that Jesus Christ was the living God, even when he was a dead man: for, O death! you was able indeed to rend his soul and body from one another, but neither soul nor body were dissevered from his divine person. And as Jonah received no harm in that horrible prison, (which was miraculous, if we consider the strength and heat in the stomach of so large a creature); so Jesus Christ, when lying in the grave a pale and bloody corpse, saw no corruption.

His casting forth on dry land on the third day after his imprisonment, at the commandment of the Lord, answers to the resurrection of the Son of God, who, at the commandment of his Father, was

on the third day taken from prison and from judgment. When Jonah was saved from the fish, he was also saved from the sea, revisiting at once the light of day and the dry land. When Christ was rescued from the grave, he at the same time emerged from under those billows of his Father's wrath which all passed over his head. It was not possible that Jonah should be deteained in his ugly dungeon, when the Lord spake unto the fish. It was not possible that Christ should be held by the cords of death longer than the appointed time; and he may truly say, Thou hast brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.* Nevertheless in all things Jesus must have the pre-eminence, and we must certainly acknowledge that a greater than Jonas is here.† For whereas Jonas did not contribute in the least towards his own restoration, but would have for ever continued in that melancholy prison, if he had not been miraculously delivered from it; our Redeemer, on the other hand, as he had power to lay down his life, so he had power to take it again. The fish that swallowed Jonah might, for ought we know, receive as little harm by the prophet, as the prophet by the fish; but, O grave, Jesus was thy destruction!—This hungry monster had gorged all the race of Adam, and never said, It is enough.‡ Never any descended into the grave but it was able to digest them, till Jesus Christ died, and was buried. This grand devourer snatching the bait of his human bo-

* Jonah ii. 6. † Matth. xii. 41. ‡ Prov. xxx. 15.

dy, was not aware of the hook of his divinity, and was forced to surrender her prey, having received such a deadly wound as never shall be healed.

His preaching to the Ninevites, and saving them from imminent destruction, corresponds to Jesus Christ's preaching to the Gentiles by his apostles after his resurrection from the dead. For the gracious design of preserving a guilty city, by turning them from their evil ways, was the prophet preserved in the monster's belly, and revisited the light on the third day. And for the same merciful purpose was Jesus raised from the dead, to save a guilty world from death, and to bless them, in turning every one of them from their iniquities.—The belief those poor Gentiles gave to the threatening prophet, and their speedy repentance, was it not a prelude of that quick reception the doctrine of Jesus Christ should meet with among them that were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel? On this occasion the prophet acted a most unworthy part, and evinced a greater regard to his own reputation, than the salvation of his hearers. Sure never man suited his name worse; for he is liker a vulture than a dove. In this Jonah is not a type of Jesus Christ, who wept over Jerusalem, not because they repented, but because they repented not, and knew not the things that belonged to their eternal peace. On this account, as well as those formerly mentioned, we may truly say, that a greater than Jonas is here.*

* Matth. xii. 41.

PART SECOND.

TYPICAL THINGS.

1. THE VISION OF JACOB'S LADDER.

IN the multitude of dreams there wants not divers vanities; yet God is also in sleep; and has conveyed to the human mind notices of the last importance in a dream, in a vision of the night when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed: so great is that power he has over us, both when we wake, and when we sleep. A pregnant instance of this we have in Jacob's night-vision, which God granted unto him in Bethel, to cheer his drooping heart, when he wandered all solitary, an exile from his father's house, to avoid the resentment of his brother. The sun was set, and the lonely traveller not being able to reach the next town, or on some other account, not known to us, resolves for one night to make the great God his landlord, the earth his bed, the stones his bolster, and the canopy of Heaven his covering: for though he was delicately brought up by his fond mother, whose darling child he was, the tender usage he received had not so far unmanned him, as to betray undue softness and effeminacy; for upon this occason he could put up with very coarse accommodation. There is no doubt his working mind would be fertile of melan-

choly thoughts, as he lay thus in the open air, exposed to the chill damps of the night, and other dangers. Perhaps he might compare his dismal solitude with the happier lot of Esau, who was enjoying himself at home with his father. Who knows but he might begin to think, that the birthright and blessing he was so fond of obtaining, were not such great matters, as that he needed, for their sakes, to have exposed himself to such hardships as he presently felt, and might still expect to meet with? But if any such pensive thoughts disturbed his mind, they are soon chased away by the welcome approach of sleep, and the delightful vision he saw, together with the friendly words he seemed to hear from the mouth of God himself: for he dreamed, and behold, a ladder, the top of it reached to Heaven, and the foot of it was set upon the earth: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. And behold, the Lord stood above it;* not silent, but speaking words full of inexpressible consolation.—The meaning of this emblem is the present subject of our thoughts: and perhaps it will be found on a nearer inspection, both to represent the mystery of providence, and of redemption.

And, first, it was a vision of providence, and might be intended to suggest to the patriarch's mind the following important and interesting truths.—That though God be in the heights above, he forgets not the affairs of mortals below, as though the inter-

* Gen. xxviii. 12. 13.

posing clouds could veil them from his sight, or the huge distance of Heaven and earth could be an objection against his superintending care.——That though he is able, by himself alone, to govern the whole world, without the help of any created beings whatever; yet he is pleased to use the ministry of angels, which walk invisibly through the earth, and are continually passing from Heaven to earth, to fulfil the pleasure of JEHOVAH, and from earth to Heaven, to receive the commands of their eternal Sovereign.——That the regards of Providence, and the kindly offices of these spiritual creatures, are not confined to large societies, and the grand revolutions that happen in the world, but are even extended to the most private interests of every individual; for none but Jacob was present in the place where the ladder seemed to stand.——And lastly, that the divine Providence exercises the most tender care, when one's situation is most deplorable, destitute, and afflictive: for Jacob saw this vision when his head was lying hard, and his heart perhaps tormented with anxious care, when he was leaving a kind mother, a religious father, and the place where he was born and educated; uncertain of the reception he would meet with from his relations, or if he should ever see his dear parents any more. But as his affliction abounded, his consolation did much more abound.

But perhaps we shall not think amiss, though we consider this emblematical ladder as a figure of the

Messiah himself, who is the blessed medium of communication between Heaven and earth;—the way without whom no man comes to the Father;—and the one Mediator between God and man. We can scarcely find a better explication of what Christ himself promised to Nathaniel, that Israelite indeed, Hereafter ye shall see the Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man,* than by comparing it with this wonderful ladder, which he seems to hint was himself. And there is no contemptible analogy.——For, first, whereas the foot of this ladder was on earth, and the top reached to Heaven; this may both represent what is the constitution of his person, and what are the blessed fruits of his mediatorial interposition. As the ladder seemed to unite the Heaven and earth, the most distant extremes; so the person of Immanuel unites the human nature and the divine, though the distance between them is infinitely great. And as the ladder opened a path from God to man, and from man to God, by reaching from Heaven to earth; so the mediation of Jesus Christ has paved a way both for the approach of the Deity to sinners, that he may dwell with them; and for the access of sinners unto God, that they may dwell with him, and have their conversation in Heaven.—O merciful and faithful High Priest, by thy incarnation and satisfaction, a friendly correspondence is established between the Heaven and earth; for thou

* John i. 51.

hast laid thy hand upon us both, and art thyself our new and living way to everlasting bliss, and the channel of conveyance to every spiritual blessing. ——Whereas the angels of God were seen to ascend and descend upon the ladder: this may both signify, that in Jesus Christ angels and men shall be united in one society; and that by Jesus Christ they are upheld from falling, and supported in their happy state. Were they not the friends of men, why should they be represented as running on our errands? Were they not confirmed and supported by Jesus our Mediator, why should spiritual beings, and winged messengers, be said to ascend and descend upon the Son of man, as on a ladder?—— Whereas the Lord stood above this ladder, and from its top spoke good and comfortable words to his servant Jacob, confirming the gracious covenant made with his fathers: is not this a clear intimation that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, confirming his covenant, and uttering his gracious promise, as well pleased in his beloved Son?——Whereas Jacob alone was at the foot of the ladder, on whose top the Lord seemed to stand: might not this been considered by the adoring patriarch, after he awoke, as a comfortable intimation, that the glorious person who was signified by the vision, should spring out of his loins, and be made of his seed according to the flesh, as the true possessor of the birthright, and inheritor of the patriarchal blessing?——And, lastly, Whereas he saw

but one ladder, Jesus Christ is the alone Mediator, without whom the Father comes to no man, and no man comes to the Father.

2. THE VISION OF THE BURNING BUSH.

THE last emblematical vision was seen in a night dream by Jacob; but that which we are now to consider was shewed unto Moses in the day-time, when he was broad awake. This future lawgiver was now, of a prince in Egypt, become a shepherd in Midian; and as it was the purpose of God to send him to Pharaoh with a commission to demand the release of his oppressed people, he was pleased to grant him an illustrious manifestation or prodigy, to rouze his attention to what God should speak; and to presage the success of his negociation, and his own future dignity. At the time when he saw the heavenly vision, he was tending the flock of Jethro, as honest industry, and the moderate excise of the thoughts about the lawful affairs of the world, is no obstruction to divine communications. And the place in which he received it may also be worthy of our notice: he led his flock to the back side of the desart, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb; for solitude and retirement from the hurry of the world, has always been a friend to holy meditation, and intercourse with God. So Moses found on this occasion: for the Angel of the Lord, not a created angel, but the uncreated An-

gel of the covenant, who assumed to himself the high title of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ;* and, I AM THAT I AM ;† and who required of Moses the tokens of the most profound respect, and religious subjection.——To be short, the Messias himself appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush ; and, Behold, the bush burned with fire, yet was not consumed.‡ The novelty of the sight induced him to satisfy his curiosity by a nearer approach ; but he was stopt short by the voice of God, which sufficiently explained the prodigy. Should it now be enquired, why the divine Majesty chose to appear in this manner ? Tho' we could assign no other reason but his sovereign pleasure, it were sufficient. But most generally, the appearances and manifestations of the Deity, in that age of types, were vouchsafed in such a manner, as to represent some hidden mystery, or important doctrine of the gospel. They who think that the flame of fire might signify the pure and spiritual nature of God, who appeared in it, of which no similitude can be made, are certainly not mistaken. And it is also not unfitly observed, that the burning bush may represent the state of Israel at that time, who were intangled in the thorny bush of adversity, and encompassed with the fire of affliction, in which they were like to be consumed. But let us draw near, and consider with Moses this great sight with close attention ; and perhaps it will be found a most

* Exod. iii. 6. † Ver. 14. ‡ Ver. 2.

significant emblem both of Jesus Christ who was in the bush, and of the church which is his body, in every age of the world.

And, first, It seems very probable that this was a prelusive vision both of the future incarnation and sufferings of Jesus Christ.——That the bush may represent his human nature, is not unlikely, especially as the prophet Esaias compares him to a tender plant, and root out of a dry ground, in which, to the eye of sense, no form, comeliness, or beauty, should be found.——That the flame of fire may adumbrate his divine nature, will be no less evident, when we consider how often the fiery element is, in the scripture-stile, an emblem of the Deity; yea, it is expressly said, Our God is a consuming fire.*——That the union of the flame of fire with the bush may denote the union of the Godhead and the manhood, is not at all absurd to suppose: for why should Moses, in his dying benediction, be directed to speak of the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush?† May it not signify, that the continuance of the flame of fire in the bush for a short time, was a type of the fulness of the Godhead dwelling for ever in the man Christ Jesus? As the bush was in the fire, and the fire was in the bush; yet still they were distinct things, though joined thus in one: even so the man Christ Jesus is in the God, and the God is in the man, though both these natures, so mysteriously united, do still retain their own distinct properties. And if Moses was

* Heb xii. 29. † Deut. xxxiii. 1.

struck with admiration, that the bush was not consumed, though in such near neighborhood with ruddy flame; much more may we be overwhelmed with amazement, to think how a portion of our frail humanity lives for ever in a state of the nearest approach unto, and most ineffable union with the glorious Godhead, in whose unveiled presence we mortals could not live, and even the angels cover their faces with their wings.—Here also may be discerned a shadow of those direful sufferings by which the Son of God was to expiate our sin. For the wrath of God is every where in scripture compared to fire, the most fierce and dreadful of all the inanimate creatures, which, with severe impartiality, devours all combustible things. Who of all the human race could dwell with this devouring element? Far less could any abide with the everlasting burnings of the Almighty's indignation. But Jesus Christ, who dwelt in the bush, dwelt also with these fierce flames: and though he endured the wrath of God, which flamed most intensely against him, as he bore the sins of many, though he was compassed by this fire all the days of his humbled life; yet he was not consumed, because his Deity, like the angel in the bush, supported his humanity, and bade him be a glorious conqueror.

From the sufferings of the head, let us descend to the sufferings of the body, who are predestinated to be conformed to his image. Let the bush be an emblem of the church, to which it may be compared on

account of its weak, obscure, and contemptible state, in the esteem of worldly men, who are taken with nothing but what dazzles the eye of sense. For though there is a real glory, and a spiritual magnificence, in this holy society, she cannot compete with earthly kingdoms in outward splendour, any more than a bush in the wilderness can vie with a cedar in Lebanon; for besides the paucity of her true members, they are commonly to be found rather in smoaky cottages than proud palaces; and sometimes they have been found in prisons, dungeons, dens, and caves of the earth. Let the fire in which the bush burned, signify the fiery trials to which the church has been no stranger in all ages. Sometimes she has burned in the fire of persecution, and sometimes of division. But as the bush was not consumed, so neither shall the church be finally destroyed. In vain shall the great red dragon persecute this woman cloathed with the sun, and watch to devour her offspring; for a place is prepared for her in the wilderness by the great God, and there no necessary provision shall be wanting. How many times have bloody and deceitful men conspired her distruction? When were incendiaries wanting to foment and kindle those fires, which, without the immediate interposition of the Keeper of Israel, would certainly have wasted unto distruction, and completed the utter extinction of this humble bush? What society, but this alone, could have subsisted to this day, in the midst of a hating world? Where are now the mighty empires

of antiquity? They are but an empty name, live only in history, having fallen to pieces by their own weight, or been crushed by bloody war. But the church of Christ, though she has undergone many revolutions, remains, and will remain, when the consumption determined by the Lord of Hosts shall come upon all the earth.

Ask you the reason? The Angel of the Lord is in the bush, and though persecuted, she is not forsaken; therefore shall the firy trials, instead of consuming her, serve to refine her, and add unto her glory, as the bush was only brightened by the flame.

Does not the famous history of the three Hebrew worthies, who, by faith, quenched the violence of fire, attest this whole matter in the most literal sense? Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty king, takes it into his head to erect a monstrous golden image, to be worshipped by all his numerous subjects. The dedication of this new god is celebrated by a prodigious concourse of people, who, by the king's proclamation, assembled in the plains of Dura. A severe edict is issued forth against any person who should refuse to pay religious homage to the molten deity. He must be cast alive into a burning fire: for was it ever heard, that cruelty and idolatry were seprrated? The noise of every musical instrument is the signal for beginning the detestable rites of adoration. What a parade to establish this silly superstition! And now the music sounds, see how the foolish people fall down in adoration to a senseless statue! Yet

are there found among the captives of Judah, who dare dispute the royal order. O faith, how dost thou extend thy triumphs! Who can sufficiently admire the excellent spirit, and the undaunted resolution of these heroes? They stand before sovereign and angry majesty; they see the vast pomp of his courtiers; they hear the sonorous peals of the music sent from a thousand instruments; they behold the prodigious furnace gleaming to the clouds: yet are they not appalled by any, by all of these things, so apt to strike terror into vulgar minds, but despise them as ludicrous and puerile. They boldly tell the king, that the God they adored, was able to deliver them from his furnace, if he pleased; and though he should not, they would not comply to worship another god. The music that resounded through all the spacious plain, was not half so melodious as their answer to the king's menaces. The enraged tyrant orders, and without delay they are cast bound hand and foot into the burning flame. But mark the amazing event! A marvellous thing is presented to the eyes of the king; for looking narrowly, he beholds not three men melting, but four men walking in the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. These servants of the Lord were not ashamed of him, nor is he ashamed of them, but descends in a bodily shape, (a prelude of his incarnation), looses their fetters, makes a covenant for them with the flames of fire, and walking with them openly in the furnace, proclaims to all spectators, In as much as ye have done

it unto these my brethren, you did it unto me.* Go now, mighty monarch, and glory in thy despotic sway; but remember there is a King more sovereign than thou, who can make the flames of fire harmless as the morning-light; who can bid that fierce and dreadful element spare them whom thou biddest it to devour, though in the very heat of the oven; and destroy them whom thou wishest it would not touch, though standing without. Thus wherein any deals proudly, God is above them. The king, and all his counsellors, see with their eyes this extraordinary miracle, and that the faithful servants of God had not received the least damage by the fire, and are ashamed for their envy to the people. Thus was the promise fulfilled, When thou walkest thro' the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.† And so the bush, though burning, is not consumed in the fire.

3. The PILLAR of CLOUD and FIRE.

THE sojourners of Goshen were now escaped from the land of Egypt, and about to enter into the vast wilderness of Arabia, that interposed betwixt them and the promised land. The Lord who makes the clouds his chariots, and darkness his pavilion, was pleased to go before them in a marvelous pile of cloudy vapours, resembling a pillar, ascending from their camp. Here he dwelt, not for a short time, as in the bush, but for the space of forty

* Matth. xxv. 40. † Isa. xliii. 2.

years. A most extraordinary thing to be sure it was; and none of the least of the standing miracles, which he shewed to the chosen seed. The fame of this strange phenomenon was spread abroad among the nations, who heard that the cloud of the Lord stood above them, and might very well be supposed to move the question, Who is this that comes up from the wilderness like pillars of smoke?* For this cloud differed so much from all others that ever were seen, as it may justly be reckoned a complication of miracles. It was miraculous that its form was never changed, when there is nothing more variable than the appearance of the ordinary clouds that sail through the airy regions. It was miraculous, that it should always maintain its station over the tabernacle, when other clouds are carried about with tempests, and driven with fierce winds from the one extremity of heaven to the other. It was miraculous, that it should preserve its consistency forty years; whereas all other clouds are dissipated by the wind, exhaled by the sun, or dissolved in rain and dew, and in a very short time are blotted from the face of the sky. It was miraculous, that this cloud should move in such peculiar direction, as it had been endued with instinct and intelligence; for it was carried about by his counsels in a more immediate way than can be said of the other clouds of heaven. But especially it was miraculous, that contrary to the nature of all other clouds it should be

* Cant. iii. 6.

brighter by night than by day, when it had the appearance of the shining of a flaming fire.

As to the particular meaning of this cloud wherewith the Lord covered his Israel, not in his anger, but in his love; it was without all doubt a visible symbol of a present Deity: God hereby condescending to adapt himself, as in many other things, to the rude taste of that ancient people, and perhaps to signify the dark and cloudy nature of the legal dispensation under which they were. But the principal reason I would suggest is the following. His appearing to Israel in a veil of cloud might be a prelude of his appearing in a veil of flesh. What tho' we should say, this pillar of cloud and fire is an emblem of that glorious person in whom the brightness of divinity is joined with the darkness of humanity? For as there were not two pillars, the one of cloud and the other of fire, but one pillar both of cloud and fire; so there are not two persons of Immanuel, the one God and the other man, but one person, who is both God and man. An adorable mystery this! strange indeed, and beyond measure surprising! But it is so far from being only a vain speculation, that it is deservedly esteemed a fundamental article of the Christian faith; and truly, without admitting it the scriptures themselves will be darker than this cloud ever was to the Egyptians.

John, the beloved apostle, and great New-Testament prophet, who saw the visions of God, and who talks in many places in the Old Testament dialect,

speaks of a glorious Angel arising out of the east, who certainly was Christ himself: He was clothed with a cloud, and his feet were as pillars of fire. A description which might very probably allude to this same cloud and fire. But if we take a more particular survey of the uses for which it served in the wilderness, we shall see with what admirable propriety they all may be affirmed of Jesus Christ, who indeed was the Angel that resided in the cloud, and is that unto his church in every age, in their bewildered state, which the cloud was to the twelve tribes, till they reached the earthly Canaan. In whom but Jesus Christ can we suppose that the great and precious promise made to the universal church to have received its accomplishment, And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon all her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence?* What then were those uses for which this cloud served the Israelites?

It was their guide that went before them in the vast pathless desart, where they wandered in a solitary way. So great was the regard they paid to all its motions, which they continually watched, that when it moved they struck their camp at any hour of the day or of the night; when it halted, they pitched their tents, and there abode till its next remove, whether the time was short or long. The times

* Is. iv. 5.

and seasons of their marching were not, as in other armies, adjusted by their counsels of war, nor left to the regulation even of Moses himself; for God put them wholly in his own power. However, it would appear, that its motions were properly timed, and mercifully proportioned to the strength of the weak, and the conveniency of all. Nor did it ever leave them, for all their provocations in the wilderness, till they arrived at the land that flowed with milk and honey. Just such a general, unerring, gentle, and perpetual guide is Jesus Christ, by his example, word, and Spirit, to all the travellers for the better country through the wilderness of this world; for, It is not in man that walks to direct his steps,* by his own wisdom, in the way that leads to life. Who can recount the wanderings of miserable sinners, till Jesus Christ was given a leader and a commander to the people? He it is who teaches to profit, and leads in the way wherein we should go. Nor is it possible that any should miss eternal glory, who walk after him in the wilderness, conforming themselves to the dictates of his holy word, with the same care as the Israelites observed the motions of the miraculous cloud. O ye followers of the Lamb, you shall not err under the conduct of your celestial guide; you shall be led forth in the way that is right, even where there is no way, till you come to the city of habitation!

It was their guard that protected them, when their

* Jer. x. 23.

Egyptian pursuers were pressing on their rear; for it removed on that occasion from their van, and went behind them, forbidding, by its darkness, the approach of the hostile army all that night on which they travelled through the flood on foot. On this occasion we are told, that the Lord looked through the pillar, and troubled the Egyptian host at the hour of midnight. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee: they were afraid: the deeps also were troubled. The clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the Heavens: thy lightnings lightened the world, the earth trembled and shook. Thy way was in the sea, thy path in the mighty waters, and thy footsteps were not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.* Such is that protection Jesus affords to his militant people, who being rescued from the bondage of sin, are marching forward to their goodly inheritance. Though Satan, with his infernal host, like the tyrant of Egypt, pursues after them, and fondly thinks to reclaim the lawful captives, the glory of the Lord becomes their rearward, Jesus is unto them for walls and bulwarks, forbidding the approach of mortal danger. He is their hiding-place, in whom they are preserved, like Israel in the cloud, being kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.

It was their candle that enlightened their dark-

* Ps. lxxvii. 16. 17. 18. 19 20.

ness ; that smoothed the rugged brow of the night, and served to abate the horrors of the wilderness after the sun was set ; for it reserved its shining appearance to the season when the Israelites were most in need of its cheerful aspect. Nor dost thou, O thou true Light ! suit thyself to the case of thy people with less condescension. Without thee this world were a dark place, and, to the eyes of our mind, more dismal than the dreary wilderness would have been in the blackest night to the Israelites, without their kind officious cloud. Blessed be God for the sun, the moon, the stars ; but more for Jesus Christ, who delivers from the blackness of darkness for ever ; and who, like the cloudy pillar, is always most liberal of his lightsome manifestations, when his people are sitting in the darkness of adversity. House of Israel, let us walk in this light of the Lord ; whilst the way of the wicked, like the way of the Egyptians, is as darkness.

It was their umbrella or screen to shade them from the sultry beams of the sun in that torrid wilderness. A most grateful service ! And whereas an apostle speaks of our fathers being baptized in the cloud, it would seem, that on some occasions this beneficial cloud refreshed the Israelites, by shedding kindly dews upon their camp. So Jesus Christ is to his people as a refreshing dew upon the grass, and as a cloud of the latter rain. Under his shadow they sit down with great delight, and find cool shelter, from the scorching beams both of divine

wrath and worldly tribulation. Happy souls who have thus the Lord for their keeper, and for their shade on their right hand. The sun shall not smite them by day, nor the moon by night:* even that great and terrible day, which shall burn like an oven, will be to these favoured of the Lord as the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

It was their oracle; for he spake unto them in the cloudy pillar. And it was their ornament; for he spread this cloud for their covering, or cloth of state, making darkness not only his own, but their pavilion. How fitly both these may be applied to Jesus Chrst, is not difficult to see. Who but Christ is the oracle of his church, in whom God speaks unto his people, both as a promising and prayer-answering God, without whom we would not have heard his voice at any time, but in the language of terror! Who but Christ is their ornament, who makes them terrible as an army with banners, and comely as Jerusalem? The pillar of cloud and fire was not half so adorning to their camp, as is thy gracious presence to every assembly and every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, O thou glorious Redeemer! Even now thou art the light of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. But how much more when this imperfect scene shall pass away, and they shall know the import of that most gracious promise, The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.†

* Psal. cxxi. 6. † Is. lx. 19.

4. The MANNA in the WILDERNESS.

WE have seen how the horrors of the wilderness were considerably abated by their miraculous cloud. But soon their provision they brought from Egypt is spent; and unless some new miracle is wrought for them, they have nothing before their eyes but the melancholy prospect of perishing with hunger. The faithless multitude, forgetting their late deliverance at the Red-Sea, fall to murmuring against Moses, and wished they had never stirred from their house of bondage. Had they got what they deserved on this occasion, the Lord had sent fire from Heaven upon them instead of food: but God, who is rich in mercy, chose to still the fretful murmurs of his first-born with the breast, rather than with the rod. He bids the Heaven supply, by its bounty, what the earth denied by its barrenness; and, without their toil or sweat, gives them plenty of bread, even in a land that was not sown. He rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them of the corn of Heaven. Man did eat angels food: he sent them meat to the full.* How happy are they who are walking after the Lord, though in a wilderness! It was a convincing proof, that man does not live by bread alone. But God intended, by this good gift, not only to supply their present necessity, but also to prefigure that spiritual meat presented in the gospel. In this interpretation we cannot possibly be wrong, when

* Psal. lxxviii. 24 25.

we have no less an authority for it than Jesus Christ himself, who, speaking to his hearers on this very subject, says, Moses gave them not that bread from Heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from Heaven. For the bread of God is he that came down from Heaven, and gives life unto the world. I am the bread of life.* Having therefore such infallible testimony to the general meaning of this heavenly food, let us try to find out the principal traces of resemblance betwixt it and Jesus Christ. In order to this we shall shortly attend to the following things.

Its falling, "The manna fell from Heaven;" Christ is he that comes down from above. It fell "round about their camp;" Christ is to be found in the visible church, and no where else——"with the dew when they slept;" Jesus Christ is purely the gift of God, who descends, like dew, upon the grass, for whom we toil not, sow not, reap not——"when they were in the most absolute need, and ready to perish;" when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly—"when they were not at all deserving it, but grievously sinning, by preferring the flesh-pots of Egypt to the prospects of Canaan;" and Christ laid down his life when sinners were preferring the pleasures of sin and vanities of the world, to all the things above. In a word, it fell "in such large quantities as to suffice that "numerous host;" in Jesus Christ there is enough to supply every want.

* John vi. 32, 33.

Its gathering by all the Israelites, may signify the improvement we all should make of the offered Saviour. It was gathered every day; so Christ should be daily improved by faith. It was gathered in the morning; for we must devote the best part of our time to seeking his face, as it is said, O Lord my God, early will I seek thee.* It was gathered without the camp; so must the soul that seeks him retire from the hurry of the world; or, to use the expression of the sacred page, go out into the fields, and lodge in the villages.† It was gathered a double portion on the sixth day, but on the seventh, which was the Sabbath, they stirred not from their tents, but lived on what they laid up the day before. So in the season of this mortal life must we labour for that meat that endures to everlasting life, in the believing improvement of the means of grace; and when the eternal Sabbath comes, we shall enjoy the hidden manna without means, or any painful endeavours.

Its parting among the Israelites, seems not to be without its meaning. Some gather less, some more, in proportion to their ability and diligence, but all received a homer (a large allowance) from the common heap. By which means, as Moses relates, "He that gathered much had nothing over," because he gave to him that gathered less; and "he that gathered little had no lack," because he received from him that gathered more. Was the manna parted liberally unto all? None are straitened in Jesus

* Ps. lxii. 1. † Song vii. 11.

Christ: They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.* Was the manna equally distributed among the Israelites? So all believers, of every sex, of every age, of every nation, strong or week, eminen or obscure, do equally partake in the common salvation; for all are ONE in Christ Jesus.

Its preparing in mills, mortars, and pans, where it was ground, beaten, and baked, to make it fit for digestion and nourishment, may put us in mind of the various sufferings of Christ's body and soul. The bread of God is he which came down from Heaven;† but ere he could prove the bread of life, he behoved himself to die. That his flesh might be meat indeed, he behoved, as it were, to be beaten in the mortar of adversity, ground in the mill of vindictive justice, and baked as in the oven of the wrath of God.

Its tasting so sweet when thus prepared, (for it resembled the fatness of oil, and the lusciousness of honey,) and its proving so wholesome and nutritive to all, though of differing constitutions; may it not signify, that Jesus Christ is to the soul both sweet and wholesome food, adapted to the taste of all, of young men, of children, and of fathers? And as the manna i supposed to have needed no other ingredients to make it palatable; no more does Jesus Christ, or the doctrine of his gospel, need any for-

* Psal. xxxvi. 8. † John vi. 33.

eign recommendation to the spiritual taste. O taste and see that the Lord is good,* says the sweet singer of Israel; and in another place, How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth!†

Its putrifying, if kept contrary to God's command, (for what was not used to-day, bred worms and stank to-morow,) might not this denote, that when the wholesome doctrines of Christ's gospel are hoarded up in idle speculation, without being otherwise received in love, or digested in spiritual nourishment, they are so far from being the savour of life unto life, as they become the savour of death unto death, and breed the worms of various lusts, and a condemning conscience: on which account it may be said here, He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.‡

Its being despised by the multitude as light food, by which their soul was dried away, in comparison with their rank Egyptian fare, renders it a proper emblem of Jesus Christ, the true bread, who is despised and rejected of men. Though the pure doctrine of Christ is like the manna, angels food, (for into these things they desire to pry;) yet are there found to whom the word of the Lord is a reproach, and they have no delight in it. A romance, a philosophical disquisition, a moral declamation, a political harangue, is far more grateful than a sermon, whose theme is a crucified Redeemer. What is this but to

* Ps. xxxiv. 8. † Ps. cxix. 103. ‡ Eccl. i. 18.

prefer the fish, the melons, the cucumbers, and onions of Egypt to the corn of Heaven? For their contempt of this celestial food, the Lord sent fiery serpents to plague the murmurers and complainers. Nor do the despisers of Jesus Christ expose themselves to less dreadful strokes, though they should not be of a corporal kind: for all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

The preserving it in a golden pot, where, for a number of ages, it was deposited in the most holy place, and remained without corruption; was it not a representation of Christ's ascension into Heaven, where he appears in the presence of God, death having no more dominion over him, and where he will be contained till the time of the restitution of all things? Why else should communion with Christ in glory be spoken of in terms alluding to this very thing? For thus it is promised, To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna,† in the words that the spirit says unto the churches.

The continuance of this heavenly bread for the space of forty years, (for so long they were in the wilderness), does it not clearly intimate, that Jesus Christ will never forsake his people while they are here below? Still shall the bread of God descend in the dispensation of the everlasting gospel, while the necessities of his people call for it: for so he prom-

* 1 Cor. x. 11. † Rev. ii. 17.

ised, when about to depart from the earth, Go, says he to his apostles, teach and baptize all nations: and lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*

The ceasing of the manna upon their tasting the corn of Canaan, may it not be viewed as a figure of ordinances, their ceasing when the wandering tribes shall gain their promised rest? Or shall we say, that as their heavenly provision failed when they tasted the bread that comes out of the earth; so when the children of God themselves begin to relish over-much the things of the earth, they may expect that heavenly consolations will be suspended in proportion? When they are in worst terms with the world, or when it is unto them as a wilderness, and a land not sown, then truly God is good to Israel. Know your mercy, ye distinguished favourites of Heaven! nor envy their happiness who eat the calves out of the stall, and the lambs out of the fold, but are not fed with the heritage of Jacob. Let the sensual voluptuary glut himself with the impure pleasures of sin, which, like the little book that John did eat, are sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly, and to whom we may adapt the significant words in Job, His meat in his bowels is turned: it is the gall of asps within him.† Let the rapacious worldling, who is smit with the dull charms of gold and silver; who is all hurry, hurry, about the busi-

* Matth. xxviii 19. † Job xx. 14.

nesses of this transitory life; let him fill his belly with the hid treasure of God, which never yet did satisfy a soul immortal. Let the legal self-justiciary, who is perhaps called by the name of Christ, but eats his own bread, and wears his own apparel, and trusts to his own righteousness, in whatsoever shape, as the ground of his acceptance with God; let him also spend his money for that which is not bread, and his labour for that which satisfieth not. But let the Christian who knows the gift of God, and the excellency of the heavenly provision, let him labour not for the meat that perishes, but for the meat that endures unto everlasting life. Hungry and starving soul, you ask for bread, the world gives you a stone; what else are worldly riches? You ask a fish, the world presents you with a serpent; what else are sinful pleasures? But hearken diligently unto him who is himself the living bread, Eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto him; hear, and your soul shall live.* What is a happy old age to a happy eternity? This, O Jesus, is thy unspeakable gift! He that eats thee by faith, shall live for ever. He that comes to thee, shall never hunger; and what is more, shall never die.—O Lord, deny us what thou wilt, but give us this bread for evermore!

* Isa. lv. 2. 3.

5. THE ROCK IN THE WILDERNESS.

"BREAD shall be given them," says the prophetic voice ;* the proof of this we have already seen: "Their water shall be sure ;" the proof of which we shall presently see. For he clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought also streams out of the rocks, and caused waters to run down like rivers.† What cannot this mighty God do, at whose command the clouds shall yield bread, which usually comes out of the earth, to appease the hunger of his beloved people ; and the rocks shall send forth water, which usually falls from clouds, to satisfy the thirst of his chosen race? Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turned the rock into a standing water, and the flinty rock into a fountain of water.‡ Let us briefly recollect this memorable event, and its signification.

The ransomed tribes are, for the trial of their faith conducted by the Lord, who alone did lead them, to a dry and thirsty spot in the wilderness at the rock Rephidim, where there was no water to drink. They ought to have recollected on this occasion, that the God who brought them here, would most certainly extricate them from their present difficulties, as he had done often before. But, O impatience, how absurd and unreasonable art thou!

* Is. xxxiii. 16. † Ps. lxxviii. 15, 16. ‡ Ps. cxiv. 7. 8.

Instead of betaking themselves to God by humble prayer, and quietly waiting for the salvation of the Lord, they impiously demand of Moses to give them water. They reproach him with decoying them out of Egypt, where they were living so happy, with no other design than to famish them in the wilderness. In vain does this meek and gentle servant of God remonstrate the injustice and impiety of their outrageous conduct. They are at the very point of stoning their deliverer, and rewarding, with cruel death, the good offices he had done them. He flies to God as his sanctuary, and invokes the almighty aid, not to revenge the affront offered him by the rude multitude, but to relieve them in their present straits. The prayer is no sooner made than answered. He is directed to take with him the elders of Israel, and the wonder-working rod, with which he smote the rivers: And behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.* Moses obeys, and the event crowns his wishes. But long after, when the people were in Kadesh, and reduced to the same straits they were in at Rephidim, the unbelieving race relapsed into their old rebellious murmurs. Moses is directed to nearly the same method of relief, but does not acquit himself with the same temper and moderation. For they angered him at the waters of strife, and provoked his

* Exod. xvii. 6

spirit so, that he spake unadvisedly with his lips, betraying at the same time, in presence of the whole assembly, his own diffidence in the promise of JEHOVAH: for being commanded to speak unto the rock, and assured that it would obey his voice, he seems to have exceeded his commission, by addressing the host in the language of wrath and doubting, and smiting the rock more than once. The miracle indeed was wrought, but the worker, though dear to God, severely punished for his offensive behaviour and unbelief, being involved in the same fate, together with Aaron, as the rest of that generation, to die in the wilderness, without entering into the promised land.

That more was meant than to give water for their thirst, might have been presumed from the naked history in Moses. This God could do without a miracle. He could have opened the bottles of Heaven, or led them to another Elim. Or if he had chose the miraculous method, why should the rock be smitten with a rod, to give streams in the wilderness, and waters in the desart, while God himself was standing on its summit? But the great apostle of the Gentiles puts it beyond all doubt, and warrants us to say, without faultering, that this Rock was Christ.* Having therefore such an infallible guide to our meditation, let us reflect a little what was the rock; what was the smiting; and what the water that issued from it, and followed them in the way.

* 1 Cor. x 4.

The rock itself might be an emblem of his person, in whom is everlasting strength, to whom we may fly as a refuge, and upon whom we may build as a foundation. There is not, perhaps, a metaphor more frequent in the book of God than this, "God is a rock." Though never once used before this remarkable occurrence, yet soon after it is adopted by Moses in his dying song.

The smiting of the rock might prefigure his satisfactory sufferings, who was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; and one of the soldiers opened his side with a spear, and there came out blood and water. The rock was smitten with the rod of Moses, the type of the law; and it was the curse of the law that subjected him to the ignominious cross, who redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.* The rock was smitten in the presence of the elders and people of the Jews with noise and tumult. So Christ was wounded for our transgressions at Jerusalem, the most public place; and at the passover solemnity, the most public time. Then and there he endured the cross, and despised the shame. At the commandment of the Lord the rock was smitten; and by the commandment of the Lord was the Captain of our salvation made perfect through sufferings. It was smitten but once with approbation, and when Moses smote it twice, the Lord was angry for doing it. Might not this be an obscure intimation, that Christ, by one offering,

* Gal. iii. 13.

should finish the work of our redemption? for he needed not often to suffer from the foundation of the world. But whoever they be that crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, they shall not go unpunished.

The water that issued from the rock, what might it signify? Shall we say, it is an emblem of the glad tidings of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which are to the distressed conscience as cold water to a thirsty soul? In vain did the poor and needy seek water to refresh their troubled minds in the legal doctrine of the scribes and Pharisees, or in the philosophical disquisitions of the Gentile sages. Still their soul failed them for thirst. But the Lord heard them, and the God of Jacob did not forsake them.* For in the preaching of the everlasting gospel, both to the Jews and Gentiles, the charming promise received its accomplishment in the most ample manner, I will open rivers in the high places, and springs in the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.† The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragon and the owl, because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desart, to give drink to my people, my chosen.‡ Or shall we say, that the water from the rock is an emblem of the influences of the blessed Spirit, that, like a river pure as crystal, issues from the throne of God and the Lamb? To this refreshing, cleansing, and prolific element, our Lord himself com-

* Isa. xli. 17. † Ver. 18. ‡ Chap. xliii. 20.

pares this glorious person, when on the last day of the feast, he stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believes on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* Or shall we say, that this water may be an emblem of that precious blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin; and except we drink it in a spiritual manner, we can have no life in us? Or, lastly, shall we say, that the water that issued from the smitten rock did represent all the blessings of redemption, the salutary effects of his sufferings and death? for to him we may apply what the prophet fortels, And a man shall be as rivers of waters in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.†

These waters flowed not till the rock was smitten with the rod of Moses. Nor could we have derived these gracious benefits from Christ, which we do partake, if he had not suffered. The striking of a flint, one should think, would rather bring fire than water. But it was of the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. Who would imagine, that the Redeemer's sufferings, which in themselves were tragical and melancholy, should prove so consolatory to the believing soul? O christian, it is thine to extract joy out of sorrow, happiness out of misery, glory out of ignominy, life out of death, though these things seem as impossible as to fetch water from the flinty rock.

* John vii. 37, 38, 39. † Isa. xxxii. 2.

The waters flowed when the rock was smitten, not in a scanty measure, but in large abundance. The miraculous stream was not exhausted, though many hundred thousand men, with their herds, drank of it. Nor were the dry places of that sandy desart able to imbibe the copious moisture. So inexhausted is the fulness of Jesus Christ, from whom all sorts of men, the Jews, the Gentiles, the Barbarians, the Scythians, the bond, and the free, may receive all sorts of blessings. You are not straitened in him, O children of men; this river of God, which is full of water, can never run dry, nor be exhausted, how abundantly soever we drink of its refreshing streams.

The waters that flowed from the rock, were not only sufficient to supply the present straits of Israel; but as the sacred story tells, they followed them in the way, for some considerable time, at least after the rock was smitten. So Jesus Christ imparts the blessed fruits of his satisfactory death, not only to the first ages of Christianity, but to the most distant ages of the world. Never shall this goodness and mercy cease to follow all that are Israelites indeed, till mortality shall be swallowed up of life, till the wilderness be exchanged for Canaan, and the militant resign to the triumphant state. The winter shall not arrest this river with icy fetters, and the drought of summer shall not drink it up like a brook; for thus the promise runs, by the mouth of the prophet Zechariah, In summer and winter shall it be.*

* Zech. xiv. 8.

Blessed be our Rock, who consented to be smitten, that we might drink abundantly of the river of pleasures. Great was the love of David's three worthies, who hazarded their lives, to purchase for their longing general a draught of water from the well of Bethlehem. But greater was the love of Jesus, who lost his life, and poured his precious blood, that we might draw water with joy from the wells of salvation, when hungry and thirsty our soul fainted in us. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* May this river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, be our consolation in this dry and thirsty land! ye broken cisterns of this world, sinful pleasures, vain comforts and delights, and our own legal righteousnesses, can you supply the place of this fountain of living waters? How miserably shall they be disappointed, who exchange the one for the other? They shall come back with their pitchers empty; they shall be ashamed and confounded, and cover their heads. How justly they deserve that God should bring upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, and pour upon them the fury of his anger, who refuse these waters of Shiloah that go softly! Open, O Lord, the ears of sinners to hear thy gracious invitation, Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.† Open their eyes to see this well, as once thou opened the eyes of Hagar in the wilderness,

* Psal. cvii. 8. † Isa. lv. 1.

lest in hell they lift up their eyes in torment, without a drop to cool their tongue. O grant us to believe on him, that we may never thirst!

6. THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

THE host of Israel had long traversed the desolate wilderness, and finding no end of their wanderings, instead of accepting this punishment of their iniquity from the hand of the Lord, again they murmur against him and Moses, and undervalue their heavenly provision, though the food of angels. The incensed JEHOVAH commands the serpents to bite them. The serpents obeyed, and many of the people died. The survivors, convinced of their error, confess their fault, and beg that Moses would intercede for them with their offended God. Moses hearkens to the people, and the Lord was intreated of him. But observe the strange manner wherein the cure was wrought. Does he kill these poisonous and fiery flying serpents outright? No. Does he drive them to some distant region of the earth, or remote corner of the wilderness, where the Israelites would be annoyed with them no more? Nor this neither. Or does he restrain these noxious creatures from stinging them, which was also possible, though they swarmed in the camp? None of all these. The serpents are suffered to live; suffered to remain in the camp; and suffered to bite as before. But a brazen serpent is, by God's command,

lifted upon a pole, that it might be conspicuous from afar; and whoever snatched a look of this lifeless serpent, needed not fear the bite of the living ones; for the wound was not mortal. Happy art thou, O Israel, a people saved by the Lord.* They were hungry, and they had miraculous bread; thirsty, and they were supplied with miraculous drink; now they are sick and wounded, and they are favoured with miraculous medicine. Here indeed the scripture was fulfilled in the most literal sense: Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near to the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble; he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.†

Let us behold, in this eminent figure, at once our miserable state by sin, and the method of our recovery by Jesus Christ, who, from this very thing, preached to Nicodemus the doctrine of his cross; For as Moses, said he, lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.‡

The devil and his angels, these are the fiery flying serpents, who, though invisible to the eye, have stung the race of Adam, and have insinuated their deadly poison through the whole mass of human na-

* Deut. xxxiii. 29. † Psal. cvii. 17. 18. 19. 20.
‡ John iii. 14.

ture ; for which we may take up the prophet's lamentation, The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.* Ever since we brake over the hedge of the divine law, these serpents have incessantly bit us. This makes the world a terrible wilderness indeed, a land of trouble and anguish, whence come the viper, and the fiery flying serpent. It is true, the wounds that are made by the scorpions of hell, may seem but slight at the first ; for many a time they have stricken us, and we were not grieved.— But as the unhappy Israelite soon perceived the deadly venom drinking up his vitals ; so shall the devil's fiery darts, sooner or later, inflame the conscience, and never fail to enkindle in the heart a burning fever of unsatisfied and irregular desires.— It was only the death of the mortal body that threatened the stung Israelite. But the soul, the immortal soul, is endangered by the bite of the infernal serpent, unless an antidote can be found. And this antidote is the Lord Jesus Christ, of which thy serpent, Moses, was a figure.

It may perhaps seem odd at first, that so noxious and hateful a creature as the serpent should be made an emblem of the amiable and beneficent Redeemer ; especially when we consider that the serpent is a name commonly appropriated to the grand adversary of God and man ; and in the scripture-stile wicked men are called serpents, and a generation of vipers. But let us reflect to whom he is a serpent ;

* Isa. i. 5.

for he is to the devil what this malicious spirit is unto us, that is, his destroyer. Why should it not be equally proper to compare the gracious Redeemer to the serpent as to the lion, both which are names of his great enemy? What is the strength of the roaring lion of hell, to his strength who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah? And what is the subtlety of the devil, the old serpent, to the wisdom of Jesus Christ, the new? Besides, the serpent being the first cursed creature, may, even on this account, be pitched on as a type of him who was to become a curse for us. But whereas the serpent of Moses was void of poison, and wore no sting, for it was only the form of a serpent; it is natural here to think, how Jesus Christ only appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, but was utterly a stranger to the venom of sin, though in all other things made like to us, whose poison is as the poison of a serpent. Whether the strength and lustre of the brass might be a faint shadow of the strength and glory of that wonderful person, the God-man, I shall not affirm.

But the lifting up this serpent seems an evident prediction of that death which Christ should die.—Here he is evidently set forth crucified before us, as we are taught by himself who is the end of the law for righteousness, when speaking of the death he should die, And I, says he, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men after me.* The serpent was lifted up on a pole; and Christ was lifted up on

* John xii 32.

the accursed tree. The serpent was lifted up by Moses, the figure of the law; and Christ was, by the law, subjected to endure the cross. The serpent was lifted up in the most conspicuous manner amid the camp of Israel; and the crucifixion of the Son of God was transacted in the most public manner at Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea. It was God who commanded the serpent to be lifted up in the wilderness; and it was God who commanded the Lord and Saviour to lay down his life, and adjusted, by his determinate counsel, all the shameful, and all the painful circumstances of that awful and amazing scene. If it had not been with a view to its elevation on the pole, Moses had not been ordered to make this brazen image; nor would the Son of God appeared in the likeness of a man, but with an intention to expire on the cross, and give his life a ransom for many. The serpent was lifted up, that whosoever beheld it, might be healed and live; and Christ was crucified, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life.

That a wounded Israelite should be saved by looking, and a perishing sinner by believing, are things that bear no small resemblance to each other. For what is believing on him, but seeing him who is invisible, that, like Moses, we may endure? What is it but looking on him whom we have pierced, that we may mourn? How fitly may the glorious words in the prophet Isaiah come from the mouth of the

crucified Redeemer, Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else; besides me there is no Saviour?* Let us more particularly observe the likeness of their remedy to ours.

It was a method of cure solely contrived and appointed of God, from whose ordinance alone it received its efficacy. Who would so much as have imagined in a dream, that to look at a dead serpent of brass, would cure the bite of a living serpent? Should reason be allowed to give her verdict, she would perhaps be so far from pronouncing it a proper expedient, that she would rather judge it a gross absurdity; especially if it be true what some affirm, that the sight of burnished brass is naturally pernicious to them who are bitten of serpents; and if it be true, what is also asserted, that to see but the shape of any venomous creature, increases the torment of the unhappy sufferer whom it bit. Exactly so; the method of our recovery by the cross of Jesus Christ, is a device that claims God himself for its only original. The world, by wisdom, never would have arrived at the knowledge of it; nay, it is a thing they are highly offended with; for it is in them that perish foolishness: but to them that are saved, it is the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation, to every one who believeth.—Though reason would not have thought, God has ordained it. To this alone must all its efficacy be

* Isa. xlv. 22.

ascribed: for it is the will of the Father, that whosoever seeth the Son, and believes on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

It was a method of cure that never failed, being no less sure than strange. Not an Israelite died, as Moses assures us, who looked at the brazen serpent. Where were they ever ashamed that put their trust in Christ? Were they ever disappointed in their expectations, that believed in him for everlasting life?

It was a method of cure that might be easily put in practice by an Israelite, if he was not blind. Perhaps he might happen to receive his wound in some remote place of the camp; and though it should have affected him in such a manner, that he could neither move hand nor foot, yet without stirring from the place where he was, without sending for physicians to apply their medicines, he was saved by one glance of his eye. In like manner, if the god of this world has not blinded our minds, we are saved, not by working, but by believing. The works of the law are physicians of no value to the distressed conscience; but Christ is a present help, and to find him we need neither climb up into Heaven, nor descend into the deep.

It was a remedy that might be repeated as often as there was occasion for it. So Christ is the propitiation for our sins, to whom we may warrantably have recourse as often as we are wounded by hell-

* John vi. 40.

lish temptations, and in every time of need. Yet let no abuser of this heavenly doctrine infer, that because the remedy is at hand, we may be careless and secure, and expose ourselves at random to the painful stings of the infernal serpents. What Israelite would been so mad as to handle these hateful creatures, and court them to instil their venom, with no other design than to try the experiment of the brazen serpent's virtue? Would not this been a horrid perversion of that healing ordinance, and at least a tempting the Lord? But the truth is, the human race do not more abhor the touch and neighbourhood of serpents of every kind, than an Israelite indeed, or a sincere believer, when acting up to his character, will abhor even all approaches to temptation. It is every whit as reasonable to suppose, that because the serpents in the wilderness were not permitted to destroy the Israelites, by reason of their heavenly antidote, therefore they loved the serpents, and delighted in their society; as it is to suppose, that the true Christian can be encouraged to sin, or love that which he hates, because of abounding grace.

It was a remedy that proved effectual, without all doubt, to the Israelite who used it, though his visive faculty had been ever so weak. So the weakest faith if genuine, is as saving as the strongest, because its object is the same.

It was, in short, a remedy that ascribed the whole glory to God; even as in the work of our salvation

by Jesus Christ, all boasting is excluded. While the believing soul treads upon the adder, and tramples the dragon under feet, and says, O death, where is thy sting?* O Satan, where is thy power? let him also say, Thanks be unto God, that gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.†

7. THOUGHTS on the VAIL of MOSES.

THE lawgiver of the Jews having ascended the second time to mount Sinai, where he obtained a sight of the divine glory, and got the second tables inscribed anew, with the finger of God, after the first were broken, now descends to the camp with the tables in his hand, but is greatly surprised to see his brother Aaron, and other Israelites, filled with perturbation at his approach, and afraid to look him in the face. Such horror might indeed have well become them the first time he descended; for they had, during his absence, been guilty of that almost unpardonable crime, the making the golden calf, which they could not but suspect would be highly resented both by God and Moses. But now their peace was made, and their prophet comes with the pledges of reconciliation in his hand, what can be the reason (might he say to himself) of my brethrens running away from me, as I were still their enemy? The face of Moses was equally meek as before; but though the features were the same, it shone with a glory visible to every body but himself. This strange

* Cor. xv. 55. † Ver. 5. 7.

phenomenon was the cause of that awful distance they kept. But perceiving that his voice was the same, though his face was altered, they resume their courage, and venture to approach him, though still they dare not come to any close interview with their shining lawgiver, till, in condescension to their weakness, he put a vail upon his glorious face. Such honour it pleased God to confer on his faithful servant, not only to inspire the minds of the Israelites with greater reverence for him, but chiefly to dignify that dispensation of which he was the minister. We are not told how long this miraculous brightness lasted, but in all appearance it was not of long duration, and vanished gradually away, to signify the transient nature of that œconomy.

Moses himself, perhaps, intended no more by vailing his face, than what is expressed in the history. However, the wisdom of the Holy Ghost having given us an allegorical interpretation of this action, by the mouth of the apostle Paul, let us dwell upon it a little.

The vail upon the face of Moses, according to that eminent apostle, did signify, that, partly through the obscurity of their law, and partly through the blindness of their hearts, the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which was abolished. Now that which was abolished is their legal dispensation, and the end of that which was abolished is Jesus Christ himself, who is the end of the law for righteousness, as having fulfilled its meaning,

cancelled its authority, and introduced in its room a far more excellent œconomy.

What! may some reply, did Israel not know the meaning of their law? Was it the intention of the Almighty to conceal from them a thing in which they are so highly interested? Had they no sufficient intimations, that their ritual institutions did point at better things, and were, in future time, capable of repeal, and would actually receive an end?

In answer to this, it is not at all denied, but there were many things in the writings and law of Moses, that not obscurely hinted its true design. The vail of Moses was not so thick and broad, but some rays of his did actually transpire. Even as the darkness and blackness that involved the frighted summit of mount Sinai, was interspersed with flashes of lightning, and gleams of fire. The attentive Israelite, who meditated upon the law of the Lord day and night, might know that more was meant than was plainly expressed. The constant expectation of a Messias, which universally obtained in all ages of the Jewish church, might fully convince them of the weakness of their rites, to do what they seemed to promise, and that the ceremonial law was far from being the whole of their religion. They had it hinted unto them in the dying benediction of their great forefather, that their judicial law should not be always observed, but that a period should arrive, when the sceptre should depart from the royal tribe. A small measure of ac-

quaintance with their own hearts might have easily persuaded them, that the demands of the moral law, or ten commandments, were too rigid for them ever to hope justification, by their compliance with them: for however much it may be thought, by superficial observers, that the first nine precepts in the law may be fulfilled by an imperfect creature; yet it is evident, that the very letter of the tenth commandment forbids the sins of the heart, and all the motions of concupiscence. How can the proudest legalist plume himself with the foolish conceit of being able to conform himself in all respects to the very letter of the law, when the very letter of the law says, Thou shalt not covet ?* If then there were many Israelites who rested in their law, without looking any further, and fondly imagined that it was able to give them eternal life, this fatal mistake was not chiefly owing to the obscurity of their dispensation, but to the blindness of their hearts, that were hard as the stones on which their law was written, and vailed as their lawgiver's face.

But, after all, it must be confessed, the law and holy books of Moses, have much obscurity in them, when compared with the great plainness of speech used by the apostles in the New Testament. They may be compared to a fine picture placed in a dark corner, though its principal figures may be discerned by a penetrating eye: it is however, impossible the delicate touches of the pencil, the distributions

* Exod. xx. 17.

of light and shade, the beauty of the tints, the elegancy of the designs, can be thoroughly perceived by the most vigorous sight, till the finished piece is translated from its obscure situation, and set in an advantageous light.

One that reads the writings of Moses, and throws but a cursory glance over the moral, the ceremonial, and the judicial law, without remembering that, like Moses, they put a vail on their face, would be very apt to mistake the true design of the whole system, and to entertain many erroneous opinions, that are really inconsistent with its original intention, though they seem to be founded upon it. One would think, the ceremonial worship, prescribed so minutely by Moses, must certainly have been very acceptable to God, even for its own sake, or he would never been at the pains to adjust, by his express authority, the smallest circumstances relative unto it. One would almost imagine, that the Deity took pleasure to eat the flesh of bulls, and drink the blood of goats: that he is pleased even with outward corporal uncleannesses; that the beauty of his worship consists in the outward pomp of splendid rites; that the blood of slaughtered beasts was able to take away sin; that man has still a power to obey the moral law; that we must enter into life by keeping the commandments; that righteousness can come by the law; that the natural seed of Abraham could never be rejected from being the people of God; that their civil state should never be unhinged, and

their ceremonies should never be abolished. These, and many such false opinions, might been suggested by the terms in which the law is uttered: and many a carnal Jew was taken in this snare. Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their hearts.*

In vain did the prophets endeavor to pull this vail aside, and reclaim from these vain imaginations that stiff-necked people, the bulk of whom persevere in their absurd prejudices, and presumptuous expectations, to this very day.

If any should enquire, why the revelation of the divine will was not equally plain in the past as in the present age? why the God with whom light dwells, would deliver a law to his people, of which the true design and genuine scope was not obvious at the first view? It is not for us to dive into the eternal counsels; it was the will of God that it should be so; and who dares say to him, What dost thou?† Let us rather observe how the vail was gradually removed, till Moses stands confessed, and the design of his œconomy is no longer a mystery, since the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Much is said in the prophetic scriptures, that might have undeceived the blind Jews, and taught them to abate their vain confidence in their national privileges, their ceremonial observances, and their moral righteousnesses. The grand doctrines of Christianity, relating to the person, the character,

* 2 Cor. iii. 15. † Job ix. 12.

and mediation of Jesus Christ, are laid down in these venerable writings with greater perspicuity than in the books of Moses. But though the prophets harmoniously conspire in giving their suffrage to every Christian doctrine; yet still they put upon their face the vail of poetical figures, and ceremonial phrases. They describe spiritual blessings by images of civil peace and plenty. With them the victory of Jesus Christ is the treading of a wine-press, in which the wine is the blood of slaughtered enemies; prayer is incense, and a pure offering; conversion is going up to Jerusalem; gospel-worship is the celebration of the festivals of the Jews.

But now comes John the Baptist, the harbinger of Christ, who talks still plainer than Moses, or the prophets; and instead of commending the Levitical sacrifices, he invites his hearers to regard that unknown person, to whom he pointed, as the complement of them all, Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world.*

But by the ministry of Christ, and his blessed apostles the law is wholly unmasked, and the vail on Moses' face entirely done away. The lowly birth, indigent life, and ignominious death of the Messias himself, was an incontestible proof, that his kingdom is not of this world, as the Jews expected.—Though he was the great High Priest, he gave no attendance at the altar; and his forerunner, though born a Levite, never officiated in the temple. This

* John i. 29.

was a plain declaration, that he was come to abrogate these ancient rites. But if we attend to the strain of his doctrine, it will appear how it was calculated to remove the vail, and cure the prejudices of the mistaken Jews. He taught, that a man is not defiled by what enters in at the mouth; foretold, that their city and temple, the centre of their worship, should be razed, and that a spiritual worship should be established over all the world, and might be presented unto God in every place. That he might pave the way for explaining the grand doctrine of justification by his imputed righteousness, he expatiated upon the vast extent of the moral law, and frequently inculcated the sad depravity of human nature. He spoke of himself as the fulfiller of all righteousness, the heavenly manna, and the antitype of the serpent lifted up in the wilderness.

But after his ascension, he inspired his apostles to finish what he had only begun, and completely remove that vail which Moses put upon his face. By their apostolic decree, they instructed the Christian Gentiles in their New Testament liberty; and by their epistles addressed to the primitive churches, they entirely dissipated the obscurity of the Old Testament shadows. Now it appears, that the kingdom of God is not meats and drinks, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; that the Mosaic law was only a school-master to tutor the church in her childish state, and train her up for a more perfect institution. Now we plainly see, that righteousness

cannot possible come by the law, nor pardon by the sacrifices. If the vail is not still upon our hearts, we may behold, with open face, the glory of the Lord, and be changed into the same image, from glory to glory. Now the face of the covering spread over all people, and the vail cast over all nations, is entirely destroyed; and therefore, O house of Israel, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord.

8. OF SACRIFICES.

SACRIFICING is a religious action, in which a creature devoted to God was in a solemn manner destroyed in his presence, for sacred ends; and it was a mode of worship that obtained in the most early ages of the world. It may not only be traced up to the famous æra of giving the law from Mount Sinai; for the ancient patriarchs did commonly practise it. How many altars were built by Abraham, and his grandchild Jacob? Melchizedec was a priest of the most high God; Job offered sacrifices both for his children and for his friends; and God smelled a savour of rest, when Noah sacrificed clean beasts and birds upon the altar which he built unto the Lord. But why do I mention these venerable personages as the most ancient practisers of sacrificial worship, when it may be more than conjectured, that Adam himself did use it? Can we think, when Abel offered unto the Lord the firstlings of his flock, that his father did not instruct

him to testify in this manner his fear of the Lord? And what shall we say of the coats of skins which the Lord made for them, or directed them to make? The beasts to whom they belonged, cannot, so soon after the creation, be supposed to have died of age; they behoved therefore to be slain. How natural to suppose that they were slain in sacrifice, rather than for any other use? Perhaps, it was not without a mystery, that the skins of these beasts should clothe their bodies, whose blood made attonement for their souls. To be short then, though we can by no means assent, that, in the state of innocence, there would been the least occasion for them, they seem, however, to be as ancient as the promise about the seed of the woman, who was to have his heel bruised, while he bruised the serpent's head.

The antiquity of sacrifices being supposed, let us now see by whose authority they were first enjoined. And it will be certainly found, that as their date is ancient, their original is divine. That God prescribed them to his chosen people, is not disputed; for a great part of the sacred volume is occupied in describing the various laws by which this species of worship should be adjusted. But what shall we think of the sacrifices that were offered by the patriarchs before the law? Were they acts of will-worship? Did they contrive this mode of adoration from their own brains? Did the light of nature dictate, that the Deity could be delighted with butchering, slaying, and burning a harmless brute, or

otherwise destroying creatures that were inanimate? No: neither did the light of nature dictate them, nor blind superstition, but the sovereign will, and positive command of God, is their original warrant. Be it so we read of the practice, before we read of the precept, still, from the former, we may fairly infer the latter: for such eminent saints would never have adventured to express their devotion in such a strange manner, if they had not been required to do so by the declared will of God. Indeed, without such a persuasion, they could not have offered in faith: and we are assured, by an authority too great to be controverted, that the first man, whose sacrifice is expressly mentioned in scripture, offered, through faith, a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, of which the Deity was pleased to testify his acceptance, by some distinguishing marks of regard. Now, let us even suppose these primative believers might been so presumptuous as to invent, or practise, without the command of God, such bloody rites, it can never be admitted, that God, who has, upon all occasions, testified his displeasure against the inventions of men in his worship, would have smiled upon such self-devised modes of adoration. Instead of testifying of their gifts, and accepting their burnt-offerings, would he not rather have upbraided them, as in the words of that well-known reproof, Who hath required this at your hands?* Upon the whole, then, it is easy to see,

* Is. i. 12.

that sacifices were not offered without the command of God. And it is more than probable, that the precept and the practice are of equal age; that these holy rites were commanded immediately after the re-admission of our first parents into the divine favour, upon the back of their apostacy;—that the universal custom of sacrificing was received by tradition from the first man;—and that, after the true design of the institution was lost among the degenerate nations, the ceremony itself was still preserved.

Well then, the custom was ancient, was divine; and surely it was for some important end God would command, and the best of men practise it, for the space of four thousand years. What could move the eternal Majesty to require, for so long a time, that sacrifices should be an essential part of his worship? Was there any real excellency in these actions, that might render them pleasing to God for their own sake? Were they to be put on an equal or superior footing to acts of moral service? Not at all. Himself declares, in the most positive manner, even in the age of sacrifices, that, to offer thanksgiving, and pay their vows; to do justly, and love mercy,* were actions far preferable to loading his altar with the most costly oblations:—that though men had been ever so punctual in this kind of worship, they were not immediately entitled to the character of saints, whatever course of action they steered in their

* Psal. l. 14, and Micah vi. 8.

other deportment towards God, or their fellow-creatures. Yea, so far were sacrifices from being able to recommend the persons of wicked sinners to God, that, on the contrary, their sins, when resolutely persisted in, rendered not only their persons, but their sacrifices, detestable unto him. He lothed, he despised, he abhorred, his soul was weary to bear them. That they did really atone for ceremonial guilt, or sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, may indeed be allowed; but that they could really atone for moral guilt, purge the conscience from dead works, or be acceptable to the divine Majesty for their own sake, is denied by Scripture, Reason, and even by the Sacrifices themselves.—It is denied by Scripture.—For, in the prophet Micah, rivers of oil, and thousands of rams, are denied to be an adequate propitiation. And this needs not be wondered at; for what is still more, the first-born, we are assured in the same place, would not be accepted for transgression, nor the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul.—It is denied by Reason.—For reason herself being judge, where were the justice to punish a harmless beast for the sins of its owner? What proportion betwixt the sin of a man, and the sufferings of a brute? Can the Majesty of Heaven indeed be prevailed upon to lay aside his just anger for such a puny satisfaction? Then, Sinai, thy thunders are vanished into smoke, and there was no occasion to publish, with such solemnity and terror, to the trembling Israelites, that fiery law,

whose curses may be so easily avoided.—But let us ask even the sacrifices themselves, they will confess their insufficiency to expiate moral guilt; for there were many sins that were not to be purged with sacrifice or offering. Let David bear witness, who says to God concerning his complicated crime of adultery and deliberate murder, Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering.* Besides, the repetition of these sacsrifices is a most invincible proof, that it was not in them to make them perfect that offered: for then, would they not have ceased to be offered? Surely they would; for the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sin.

Was it then impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin, notwithstaning the antiquity and divine original of the custom to offer sacrifice? Having removed the false end of their institution, let us examine into their real intention, and we shall have a particular eye to the offerings under the œconomy of Moses. And here it will not be contradicted, though one should affirm, that sundry circumstances in the law of sacrifices might be intended to convey moral instructions. For instance, that the brutish qualities of the sacrificed beasts might signify the vices or lusts which we ought to mortify for the honour of God; or that the virtuous qualities of the victim, suppose meekness, patience, and the like, might denote those graces and virtues

* Psal. li. 16.

which the worshipper of God should cultivate in his own heart. It must not be denied, that the ancient ceremonial worship might be a figure of that reasonable service, which is ever due to the supreme Being in all the different states of the rational creature. But though these, and other considerations, may have their proper weight and place, we have not yet found out the adequate reason of these mysterious institutions. In thy bloody death, O Jesus, we see the great antitype of these legal oblations! Most certainly they were public acknowledgments of guilt, and professions of faith in the grand propitiation, which they believed should appear in the end of the world. Tell us, thou sweet singer of Israel, who is he that shall do for us what the law could not do! In the fortieth psalm, David, speaking not of himself, but of a far more glorious person, has these most emphatical words: Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.* It was not Christ who came to imitate the sacrifices, but the sacrifices were ordained to prefigure him. They were the shadow of future good things, but the body is of Christ. When Christ was first revealed, the sacrifices seem to have been practised; and when he died, they ceased to be offered. The temple heard his dying groan, and rent her vail in presence of the priesthood, as they offered the evening sacrifice. From

* Psal. xl. 6. 7.

this time forth shall your office be vacated, ye legal priests! Ye beasts of the field, no more shall ye smoke as victims on God's altar, for the merciful High Priest has now given HIMSELF an offering and a sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour unto God! Now if, with the prediction of his death they began, and ended with the accomplishment, what can be more plain than the relation betwixt them, as the shadow and substance? Set this relation aside, and it is impossible to vindicate, to any advantage, the original appointment of sacrifices, or to account for their abolition after they were injoined. Should any be contentious in this point, we have an entire book in the canon of the New Testament, in which the professed argument is the resemblance of the Old Testament sacrifices to the true propitiation. Let us here glance at some of the most glaring parallels only, betwixt the sacrifices of Moses and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

And, first, we may take notice of the qualities of the sacrificed creatures, especially of the animal kind. It was not left as a matter of indifference, and wholly in the option of God's peculiar people, with what victims they should stain his altars.—They behoved to be clean creatures, according to the law, fit to be eaten for the support of human life, and to be one with the offerer, in some sense, by their aptitude for digestion into the substance of his body. This was an evident memorial of the sanctity of the great Propitiation, and that he should be a

partaker of the same flesh and blood with those for whom he should die; for it was requisite, that both he that santifieth, and they that are sanctified, be all of one.—The integrity and perfection which God required in the bodies of these beasts may easily be accommodated to the glorious Antitype, who would been wholly incapacitate, by any the smallest blemish, from the discharge of his priestly function. For though it became the typical nation of the Jews to have a high priest involved in the same guilt of actual transgression with his brethren, who was therefore to offer first for his own sin, before he presumed to offer for the errors of the people; yet such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners.*——They were, further, to be valuable and beloved creatures, as lambs that are for cloathing, and goats that are the price of the field; and he that offered them was put to cost and damage; as indeed, in the first ages of mankind, the riches of the most opulent possessor consisted chiefly in flocks and herds. What forbids us to think here of Jesus Christ being the darling of his Father, and precious to them that believe? O the invaluable treasure of blood that was paid for the redemption of the soul! In comparison hereof, what is silver and gold, and all corruptible things? Ransack the bowels of the mountains for all the glowing gems formed there in dark retirement, when compared to the precious blood of the

* Heb. vii. 26.

Lamb, they are poor and beggarly acquisitions, and converted into pebble stones, fit to be trampled under feet.—Moreover, there behoved to be found, in the destined victims, some amiable qualities, resembling moral virtues. They were not permitted to sacrifice the stupid ass, or the sordid swine, though tame creatures; far less were the fierce inhabitants of the forest, as wolves, bears, lions, to come upon God's altar. But the sacrifices in which he delighted, were the gentle dove, the patient and laborious ox, the meek lamb, and the sheep that is dumb before the shearer and the butcher. Who sees not in these characters the very picture of the meek, lowly, patient, and uncomplaining Saviour of the world, who opened not his mouth when he was led as a lamb to the slaughter? A circumstance this, which, next to the dignity of his person, did contribute to the value of his satisfactory death.—It is also worthy of notice, that of all these beasts the first-born was most acceptable, and, according to the law, all such were holy unto the Lord. Was not this a prelude, that he whom God would give to expiate our transgression, should be the first-born among many brethren, whom they should honour as the excellency of dignity, and to whom they should owe their deliverance from death, and their title to the inheritance?—I shall only further hint, that whereas God was not only pleased, when the rich men offered of their larger cattle, but when poor men brought turtle-doves and pigeons; might

not this put us in mind, how the sacrifice which God accepts, is equally accessible to the poor and the rich? And truly, as the legal sacrifices were chargeable, in less or more to all that presented them, the real and better sacrifice costs us nothing; for we may buy it without money and without price.

From the qualities of the victims, let us go on to the sacred rites of oblation, and we shall find something in our great sacrifice corresponding to them all. When the creature that was to surrender its life for its owner was pitched upon, it was brought unto the priest, and solemnly sisted before the Lord. But our Lord Jesus was not brought by others, like the irrational animal, but he voluntarily presented himself before the Lord, when his time was fully come. Fully apprized of what was to be done unto him, he set his face to go up to Jerusalem, and patiently expected in the melancholy garden the coming of the traitor, and his band of armed men, to whom he was to deliver himself. The sacred animal being sisted before the Lord, was rendered ceremonially guilty, by the imposition of hands on its head, and by confessing over it the sins of the offerer. It was the Lord himself that laid on him the iniquities of us all. O Jesus, it is our guilt alone, that can justify the Judge of all the earth in taking pleasure to bruise thee! And this doubtless was one great reason why he opened not his mouth, while the Roman governor wondered at his silence. It was this consideration that fortified his mind at the

approach of his inconceivably bitter agonies, and held in his mouth, as with a bridle, when these astonishing words dropped from his lips, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?"—In the next place, the blood of the innocent animal, now made guilty by imputation, was shed, was poured out, and sprinkled around; for, without the shedding of blood was no remission of sin.* Talk not, ye Papists, of an unbloody sacrifice of expiation! That is the blood that makes atonement for the soul, is asserted by the God of Israel himself, who expressly assigns this reason of the strict prohibition given to his ancient people, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourns among you.† It is easy to see how this prefigured the violent death of the Son of God, who poured out his soul unto death, and whose blood cleanses from all sin.——The pulling of the skin from the butchered animals, dividing their bodies, and burning them with fire, are certainly intended to denote the exquisite torments he was to endure, when the assembly of the wicked inclosed him, and his heart was melted in the midst of his bowels like wax before the fire.——The towering of the smoke to heaven, which was sometimes perfumed with burning incense, signified how acceptable the sacrifice of Christ should be to God, and of what sweet-smelling savour.——In the time of offering, prayers were offered up. And we know, that, in the days

* Heb. ix. 22. † Lev. xvii. 12.

of his flesh, he offered up prayers, tears, strong cries, to him that was able to save him from death. The blowing of trumpets, and praising God, in the time of the holy rites, with music vocal and instrumental, which was often practised, may no doubt put us in mind of that praise which waiteth for God in Zion, on account of purging away our transgression by himself, which would have prevailed for ever against us.—The carrying the blood of the victims into the holy place, the figure of the heavenly sanctuary, corresponds to the intercession of our High Priest within the vail, where he appears as a Lamb that has been slain.

When the holy rites were finished, atonement was made. The guilt of the offerer was abolished, when his victim was destroyed: the anger of God was in some manner appeased, and he gave signs of reconciliation. But, as we shewed before, it was not in these ceremonial actions to atone for any moral guilt, except in a typical way. But he whom God hath set forth for a propitiation, hath, in the most proper sense, fully expiated the sins of all his people, who have lived, or shall live. In his atonement the believers of ancient and later times have rejoiced, as the sole foundation of their hope. And nations yet unborn shall be justified by him, from all things from which they could not be justified by Moses' law.

The fire that came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifices, which doubtless was kept alive

by the priests upon the altar, was it not an emblem of that fierce burning wrath which preyed upon the soul of the incarnate Son of God? Or was it an emblem of the holy Spirit, through whom he offered up himself, and who is stiled the Spirit of burning? or else the fire might signify that fervent love to God and man, which many waters could not quench. It was love that wrought his death; by this holy and pure flame was our astonishing sacrifice reduced into ashes.

The altar, what was it? His cross, say some. Nay, it was rather his divine nature, which like the altar supported, and like the altar sanctified, his holy humanity, which alone was destroyed. This the cross can scarce be said to do, which was but the instrument of man's cruelty, and a despicable piece of timber, which neither sanctified the body which it carried, nor received sanctification from it. Where then are they who address it with divine honours, and pay even to its picture that homage which is due to him alone, that expired in agonies on that shameful tree?

IX. The ORDINANCE of the PASSOVER.

THE fatal night was now arrived, when the destroying angel was to smite all the first-born of Egypt, and the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham. This last and sorest plague shall break the unrelenting heart of Pharoah, and dismiss the oppressed Israelites from his cruel yoke.

But mark the goodness of their God, in providing for their safety amidst the general devastation!— They are directed to sprinkle on their door-posts the blood of a lamb, whose qualities, the manner of its death, and the rites wherewith they were to eat its flesh, are very minutely prescribed, and left upon record for the generations to come. The messenger of death, they were assured, would not presume to enter these hallowed doors, though a thousand did fall at their side, and ten thousand on their right hand. Then it was that the Egyptian idols did also feel the vengeance of the true God: and so memorable was the night, that the month in which it fell, was, in all succeeding ages, to be the beginning of months, or the first month of the year. A ceremony indeed it was that seemed but weak, unmeaning, and unprofitable: but, penetrating the outward vail, let us try to discern the hidden mystery, by that same faith through which Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, that he, which destroyed the first-born, should not touch him. Its meaning we are not now left to explore by our own wit: for that it was a prophetical type, and a very expressive image of the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, an inspired apostle gives us to know, by telling us, that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.*

A Lamb was chosen out of the flock. Emblem of him who was taken from among men, and raised

* 1 Cor. v. 7.

up from among his brethren, and, like that lovely creature, did injury to none, though he received from many, and is useful in life and death, being at once our cloathing and our food. It was a male of the flock of a year old; for Christ is a Son given unto us, and suffered in the flower of his age.—— But without blemish and without spot. Though descended from an impure race of ancestors, he brought no stain of sin unto the world with him.— And though he long conversed with sinful men, and grappled with strong temptations, he contracted not the smallest taint. Even Judas and Pilate attested, that he was just and upright; the last, before he condemned, and the first, after he betrayed him.— On the tenth day of the month Abib, the Lamb was fetched from the field, and on the fourteenth day at even it was killed by all the Jews, in the place which the Lord did chuse. Even so he, of whom these things were spoken, went up to Jerusalem five days before the passover, where, with wicked hands, he was taken, crucified, and slain.——The lamb was roasted with fire. It was the fire of the Father's wrath, O immaculate Lamb of God! that forced thee to complain, My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried like a potsherd: my tongue cleaves to my jaws.* A bone of the Lamb was not to be broken, and none of it was to be left until the morning. To accomplish the first, the soldiers brake not his legs,

* Psal. xxii. 14. 15.

as was usual ; and to fulfil the last, he was taken down from the cross the same evening in which he died.——In vain had the Israelites killed the lamb, if they had not also sprinkled its blood with the hyssop upon the door-posts. And Christ is to us dead in vain, unless applied by faith unto the conscience. His blood must not be sprinkled behind the door ; for we must publicly profess, that we are not ashamed of the cross of Christ : nor below the door ; for it must not be trodden under foot : but above, and on every side, on all that we are, on all that we have, and on all we do. Indeed, by his all-penetrating eye, the doors of the house and heart are seen with equal clearness. Had a presumptuous Israelite despised this ordinance of God and neglected to sprinkle his doors with blood, he was not within the limits of the divine protection ; yea, had he ventured abroad in that perilous night, the angel was not bound to spare him. So when the arrows of destruction are flying thick and fast, the blood of Jesus is our only sanctuary. Of this only can we say, See, O God our shield :* we are guilty of death, this is the sacrifice which thou requirest : accept this blood which we sprinkle by thy command, instead of our own that deserved to reek upon our door-posts. O Jesus, we are indebted to thy atoning blood for blessings that far transcend deliverance from Egyptian bondage, or from temporal death. By thy blood we are delivered from the wrath that

* Psal. lxxxiv. 9.

is to come. Thou art our hiding-place. Under this covert of thy blood, we shall not be afraid of sudden fear, nor of the desolation of the wicked; but shall dwell in peaceable habitations, sure dwellings, and quiet resting places, nigh which no plague shall come.——Many a time the haughty tyrant of Egypt was frighted by the awful prodigies wrought by Moses; but never was he thoroughly subdued, till the blood was sprinkled. Then the prey was taken from the mighty. In vain he pursues after them, for never more shall they wear his chain.—So many a time the prophecies of Christ might fright the black prince of hell, but never was he thoroughly subdued, till on the cross he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Even so his elect people are said to overcome, by the blood of the Lamb, the enemy of their salvation. By this same blood the idols are utterly abolished. As in that night of desolation, the temples of Egypt were not spared more than the palaces; so in the days of the Messiah, shall a man cast his idols of silver and gold, which he made for himself to worship to the moles and to the bats, to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his Majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Well may this happy period be unto us the beginning of months. If the beginning of the year was changed to the Israelites, and the seventh became the first

month, much more may the beginning of the week be altered to the Christians, and the seventh day be exchanged for the first, for a Sabbath unto the Lord; for on that day a much more glorious work was finished than when he brought Israel out of Egypt, or even than when he finished the heavens, and all their host, and laid the foundation of the earth.

We have seen how the blood of the Lamb was sprinkled, and the happy consequences of this symbolical action; let us now attend how its flesh was to be eaten, and how we are made partakers of Christ, who is at once our shield, to protect us from danger, and our food, to preserve our soul in life. It was eaten roasted; for Christ is savoury to faith. A bone must not be broken; and mysteries must not be too curiously pryed into. A whole lamb must be eaten in every house; and a whole Christ received by every believing soul. It must be eaten in haste: and whatsoever our hand findeth, should be done with all our might. The bitter herbs signified the bitterness of contrition for sin, and of the tribulation we shall have in this world.—Unleavened bread is sincerity and truth. The loins girt, and feet shod, signifies the girding up the loins of the mind, and the preparation of the gospel of peace, or a readiness to every good work. The staff in the hand might signify, that here we have no continuing city. The passover was only to be eaten by the circumcised and the clean; but if a man was unclean by reason of a dead body, or in a jour-

ney afar off, he was permitted to keep a second passover on the fourteenth day of the second month.—Here let us end, adoring that condescending love that has appeared towards us the sinners of the Gentiles. At the first passover, we were uncircumcised and unclean, by reason of death; we were afar off, and without God in the world. But us hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; and in Jesus Christ we, who some time were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Therefore let us keep the feast; for even Christ our second—Christ our best passover, is sacrificed for us.

X. The ORDINANCE of the SCAPE-GOAT.

OF all the ceremonies injoined in the book of Leviticus, (that gospel of Moses), none were more significant, as we may well presume, and expressive of evangelical mysteries, than those prescribed on the solemn anniversary of general atonement. The rites of this solemn day, though in themselves but carnal ordinances, were, in their use, shadows of good things to come, and, without all doubt, expounded in this view unto the people by the godly priests, whose lips kept knowledge.—To what purpose else had been the multitude of their sacrifices unto him, who delights not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats? On this day the Jewish high priest was not first to array himself with his most costly attire, but with his linen garments. An emblem of the Christian High

Priest's incarnation, who, when he came to expiate our sin, did not array himself with light as with a garment, but with the robe of our human nature, which, though clean and white, was without splendour or magnificence. On this day he offered expiatory sacrifices both for himself and all the people. Jesus, in all things thou must have the pre-eminence! For such a High Priest became us, who needs not, as these high priests, offer first for his own sin, and then for the people: for the law makes men priests that had infirmity; but the word of the oath that was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.* On this day he made his solemn entrance into the holy place made with hands, with the blood of bulls and goats. The meaning of which the great apostle declares, is the entrance of Jesus Christ, the High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, into the holy place not made with hands, that is, into heaven itself, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

But what we shall chiefly confine our attention to, for the present, is another ceremony peculiar to this day of atonement. Besides the bullock and the ram which Aâr n was to offer, the first for himself, and the second for the people; he was also to take for all the congregation of Israel, two kids of the goats for a sin-offering. They were to be brought, as usual, to the door of the tabernacle, of the congregation-

* Heb. vii. 26, 27.

But both were not killed as was usually done: for by an uncommon rite, the two victims were pitched upon by lot, the one to be offered up in the accustomed manner unto the Lord, and its skin, its flesh, and dung, to be burned with fire without the camp; the other to be presented alive before the Lord, where Aaron, laying both his hands upon its head, confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins; and, lastly, it was to be conducted into the wilderness by the hand of a proper person, (who, they say, might be either a Gentile or an Israelite); and probably it was never more inquired after; wherefore it might be called Azazel, or the scape-goat.——We shall, for the present, leave to others the discussion of some curious inquiries about the name and fate of this devoted creature, and proceed to notice how in both these victims Christ was set forth as the propitiation for our sins.

It is true indeed, that the goat is none of these creatures that are supposed to have the most amiable properties. And it may seem odd, that the Lamb of God should be prefigured by these beasts, which, for their uncleanly and unruly temper, are emblems of the wicked, who, in the last day, shall be separated from the godly by the Judge of all the earth. But perhaps even this circumstance in the type might signify, that Christ was to appear in the likeness of sinful flesh. The goat, though commonly held an unclean creature, was, notwithstand-

ing, of the number of clean beasts in the law of Moses; and Jesus Christ, though reputed a sinner among men, was pure and righteous in the eye of God. And if it be true what is commonly reported of the medicinal qualities of this creature's flesh, and of its blood softening the rigid adamant; what hinders us to think of Christ healing our diseases, taking away our hard and stony hearts, and giving us hearts of flesh?

But wherefore two goats? Or, if two, why not both used in the same manner? Why was one of them put to death, and the other saved alive?—Doubtless they are both to be viewed as types of the great propitiation. The first goat may signify that complete satisfaction which Christ made to vindictive justice by the offering up himself; and the second goat may signify the happy consequence of this propitiatory sacrifice, in finishing transgression, making an end of sin, and carrying it, as it were, into the land of forgetfulness; that, to use the elegant words of Jeremiah, when the iniquity of the house of Israel shall be sought for, there should be none; and the sins of Judah, and they should not be found.* Nor ought it seem strange, that such a momentous truth should be inculcated so many various ways on the same occasion: for it is a singular effect of the goodness of God, to exhibit such interesting truths in different views, that we may have strong consolation. Besides that, all similitudes

* Jer. l. 20.

and types fall infinitely short of the great mysteries they point at, therefore they are multiplied, that they may mutually supply the deficiences of one another: for here the saying is made good, "Two are better than one; for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow."

That the first goat was an emblem of Christ sacrificed for us, as much as any other sacrifices, is not difficult to persuade. For, like other sacrifices, it was killed, because Christ was to die. Its blood was carried within the vail; for Christ was to appear in the presence of God for us with his own blood. Its body was burned without the camp; and Christ suffered without the gate. But let us more particularly attend the mystery of the scape-goat, and its likeness to Jesus Christ.

It was, like the other, to be taken from the congregation of Israel, and doubtless purchased with the public money. So Christ was taken from among his brethren, and bought, in some sense, for thirty pieces of silver out of the public treasury, that he might be numbered with transgressors, and bear the sins of many.

It was, like the other, presented at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord and all the people. So Christ presented himself to do his heavenly Father's will before both God and the people, when at the passover-solemnity he went up to Jerusalem, not ignorant of what was to be done unto him by Jews and Gentiles.

It was, as the other, chosen by lot, which, though cast into the lap, is not fortuitous or accidental, for the disposing is of the Lord. So Jesus Christ was destinated in the eternal counsels to bear the iniquities of his people. He was delivered into his enemies hands by the determinate counsel of God; and by this same counsel, was determined before to be done whatever happened unto him. Hence it was that Pilate was deaf to the remonstrances of his own conscience, in condemning him that was most just; and hence the people of the Jews preferred a murderer to the Lord of life, when they desired that Barabbas should be released, and Christ should be crucified.

The sacred animal, being thus presented and chosen of God, the high priest was to lay both his hands on its head, devoting it, by this action, to the service of God, and translating the sins of Israel upon it in a typical manner. Perhaps it might signify, that the hand of vindictive justice was to lie heavy on the Surety of sinners; and it is expressly affirmed by the prophet, The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

That this was the meaning of the rite, appears more evidently from the following one. For in this posture did the high priest confess all the sins of his people from whom the goat was taken. Why should their sins be confessed in this manner, if it was not to signify, that they were in some sort laid

* Isa. liii. 6.

upon the head of the innocent victim? It was thus the great Doer of God's will was made sin for us, who knew no sin. The goat could not be guilty of these sins, for it was a brute beast. Nor could its Antitype be himself a transgressor of the law, for he was a divine person. Yet both the one and the other did bear the sins of many, to which it was, in the nature of things, impossible they could be accessary in the smallest degree. It was not thy sin, O spotless Victim, but the sins of thy elect people, that consigned thee over to the bloody and shameful cross! These were the sins which took hold upon thee, and justified thy death. Surely, surely, he bore our griefs, he carried our sorrows, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him.* How else could his heavenly Father been pleased to bruise him, for whom it is no more good to punish the just, than to clear the guilty?

The devoted creature, thus laden with sin, is, by the hand of a proper person, conducted into the wilderness. Why should not this wilderness be viewed as an emblem of these afflictions to which the Surety was exposed by the sins he was charged with? Or shall we say, it might be a faint intimation, that the blessing of atonement should be extended to the world of Gentile sinners, which, in the stile of the prophet, is called the wilderness of the people? Or rather the meaning may be, that, as the mystic goat was never more looked after, or

* Isa. liii. 4.

heard of, (for probably it would soon perish, if not by hunger, at least by wild beasts); so Jesus Christ, by his atoning blood, would take away the sin of the world, and remove from them all the iniquities of his elect people, as far as the east is distant from the west. O condemning law, you have nothing to lay to their charge, for Christ is dead! therefore it is God that justifieth, and their sins and iniquities will be remembered no more.

What thanks shall be rendered to that gracious Redeemer, who was manifested to restore that glory to God which he took not away, and to take away that sin of man which he did not introduce? Be it so, there are, alas! too many to whom this all-important truth is of small account, (for some deride, and more despise it); yet to the weary soul, to the conscience burdened with guilt, it is grateful and delicious, as the full flowing stream to the hunted hart. The happy soul to whom the doctrine of atonement is manifested, he hears, upon the matter, the voice of the great JEHOVAH speaking to him in such ravishing accents; "I have made thine iniquity to pass from thee;" or, in the words of Nathan to the penitent king David, The Lord hath taken away thy sin; thou shalt not die.* Who would not be constrained, by this love, to put away the evil of their doings from before his eyes, who hath put away the guilt of them from before his face?

Draw near all ye whose consciences are burdened

* 2 Sam. xii. 13.

with the intolerable pressure of a thousand aggravated iniquities, who are ready to cry, Mine iniquities are gone over my head, they are a burden too heavy to bear.* While some, with Cain, go from the presence of the Lord, and drown their dismal thoughts in the delights of sense, or else in the whirl of business—whilst others have no ground of comfort but the general and unatoned mercy of God—whilst a third sort derive comfort to their troubled hearts from their own imperfect righteousness, their tears of repentance, their sorrow for what is past, and their resolutions to do better for the future; confess your iniquities over the head of the New-Testament Scape-goat; for he who thus confesseth and forsaketh, shall find mercy.† Thus runs the gracious promise of the holy One of Israel, By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities.‡ But he that despises this way of peace, shall bear his own burden, whatsoever he be.

XI. The ORDINANCE of the RED HEIFER.

HAVING seen the mystery of the lamb that was slain, and the goat that was sent away, we come next to the red heifer, whose ashes sprinkling the unclean, did sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, when defiled, by touching corpses, graves, and dead mens bones: and we shall see how it signified the sprinkling of Christ's blood upon our souls, to

* Psal. xxxviii. 4. † Prov. xxviii. 13. ‡ Is. liii. 11.

purge our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.

It was an ordinance which God was pleased to injoin in a very punctual manner: for the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded.* Indeed, what but the authority of God could have reconciled the minds of the ancient church to such a burdensome yoke of ceremonies? Therefore the Hebrew lawgiver takes such particular care to inculcate every where, that he delivered no laws unto them which he received not from the Lord.—No wonder that the whole system of ceremonial worship was purely founded on the sovereign pleasure of God, when it was intended to shadow forth that adorable plan of redemption which arises from the same source, and is stiled in the New-Testament the mystery of his will. It is this that imparts a venerable air to all those rites, which, had they been of human institution alone, would have merited contempt and ridicule. Let us, for one proof of this, observe the qualities, the sufferings, and the use of this heifer. These we shall see are capable of being fairly applied to Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might purify us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

What then were the qualities required in this victim? It was a heifer. Perhaps to intimate, that in Christ Jesus, there is neither male nor female;

* Num. xix. 2.

or to signify, that he would assume our nature, not in its strongest state of innocence, but in its enfeebled state of sin and misery; for he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and compassed with infirmity. It was a red heifer. The reason of this (say the Jews) was hid from Solomon himself, but is not perhaps altogether concealed from the meanest believer, who knows that his Saviour came from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; or that he is clothed with a vesture dipt in blood. Red is a colour of beauty; and he is fairer than the children of men. Red is a colour of strength; and he is the One that is mighty. Red is the colour of guilt; and he took the scarlet and crimson coloured robes of our imputed sin, that he might clothe us with the robes of his imputed righteousness, whiter than wool, purer than snow. It was a heifer without spot and blemish. Indeed this was required in every victim; and in Christ the holy One of God it was fulfilled. An unatoned God accepts nothing less than the most absolute perfection; an unatoned God was he with whom our Saviour had to do. It is therefore easy to see, that any the smallest spot would have entirely disqualified him from approaching unto God in an acceptable manner. It was a heifer on which never came yoke. As man, he never came under the yoke of sin; and as God, he was not under the yoke of duty, that is, he was not obliged to obey the law. If he paid tribute to the temple, he was not obliged to do so. (For even the

kings of the earth hold their own children free from paying taxes). But lest he should offend them who were ignorant of his true character, he pays the tribute, not with money out of his private pocket, but, to shew that he was Lord of all, with money he commanded a fish to bring from the bottom of the sea. If he appeared in the form of a servant, it was wholly owing to his voluntary condescension. If he expires in agonies on a cross, it is not because his life is violently taken away by the hands of sinful men, but because he laid it down of himself.—Therefore does his Father love him; therefore is his obedience and death strictly meritorious; and because he has done more than was his duty to do, he is not an unprofitable servant.

When a heifer was found in which these qualities did meet, what was to be done unto her? First of all, she is brought to Eleazar the priest. Here indeed the type is defective; for our high priest and sacrifice are the same. Next she is brought without the camp; for Christ suffered without the gate. She was killed before his eyes. So Christ was crucified and slain in the most public manner. Her flesh, and skin, and blood, were burned in fire, together with her dung. So Christ suffered in the whole man; and when he endured the wrath of God, which is often compared t fire, they cast upon him the dung of the most virulent reproaches. But what shall we say to the cedar wood, the scarlet cloth, and the hyssop, that were thrown also in-

to the burning? Perhaps it never was intended by the Holy Ghost, that every minute circumstance in that ritual worship should have a separate meaning affixed to it. Many usuages were, doubtless, to be practised in the ancient dispensation, with no other view than to testify their absolute submission to the divine will. What if we should say, that as the cedar wood, the scarlet, and the hyssop, were the materials of which they made the sprinkler, but first these very things must be thrown into the fire; so the means and ordinances by which the clean water of Christ's blood is sprinkled on our souls, are themselves first sanctified by his sufferings. Or the scarlet cloth might denote the guilt of sin, which was the cause of his death. The hyssop might signify the necessity of its being applied unto the conscience, or of the sprinkling the blood of Jesus upon our hearts. And the cedar wood, which is durable and fragrant, might adumbrate the sweet savour of his sufferings, and the perpetual efficacy of his atoning blood.

But when the heifer was thus reduced to ashes, are they suffered to lie and rot with the common earth, or to be scattered by the winds? No, they were carefully to be gathered up by a clean person, and deposited in a clean place without the camp, where they are to be kept, in order to make with them a purifying water to sprinkle the unclean. Who would have thought the ashes of a burned heifer worthy such regard, had he judged only by outward appearance? But, though seeming-

ly vile, they were really precious by the divine ordinance. Even so the death and crucifixion of the dying Redeemer, though in appearance an event worthy of small regard, was in reality the most memorable transaction that ever the sun beheld.—Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints :* how much more the death of his beloved Son? His blood, though trodden under foot by many, and by many esteemed as water spilt on the ground, is notwithstanding the price of our redemption, and infinitely more valuable than gold and silver, and all corruptible things.——The clean place where the ashes were deposited, was it an emblem of the church, where alone the sacred treasure of his blood is dispensed? It was without the camp. Perhaps to intimate, that those who were without the commonwealth of Israel, should partake of the cleansing efficacy of Christ's blood; and that God would put no difference betwixt them and his ancient people, purifying their hearts by faith. Or shall we say, that as the precious relicts were to be laid in a clean place; so the mystery of faith in his blood can only be held in a pure conscience?—— The ashes thus preserved were fit for use upon every occasion, as long as they lasted; whereas the blood of common sacrifices soon congealed, and was unfit to be sprinkled when it grew cold. Was not this a significant emblem of the everlasting fitness of Christ's blood to purge the guilty conscience?

* Psal. cxvi. 15.

For it is no less capable of being sprinkled now, than the moment it was shed, being always warm, always new and living blood. Let us consider, in few words, the occasion for keeping these purifying ashes, the manner of preparing them, the rite by which they were sprinkled, and the danger of neglecting it.

The occasion for the ashes, was the uncleanness of the Israelites, or strangers that sojourned among them, by reason of the necessary and voluntary, or involuntary and accidental touch of dead corpses, bones, and graves. The touch of these defiled them legally, and debarred them from access to the sanctuary of God. But our defilements now arise not from dead corpses, but from dead works, the sins we daily commit. Wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from this body of death.* Yea, what else are the best duties we can perform but dead works, if God should enter into judgment? Even these need to be burried out of our sight, and covered from the view of impartial justice with the covering of Immanuel's righteousness. And till we are purged from these, we cannot serve the living God.

The manner of preparing these holy ashes, was by mixing them with running water in a vessel. An emblem of that divine Spirit which they that believe on Christ shall infallibly receive, by whose invisible, but powerful operation, the blood of Christ is made

* Rom. vii. 24.

effectual to purify our hearts. As the ashes were mixed with the water in this typical ordinance, so the blood and Spirit of Christ are undivided in their working: for they that are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, are washed in the same name by the Spirit of our God; and from them whom he sprinkles with clean water, he takes away the hard and stony heart.

The rite of sprinkling was in this manner. On the third day, and on the seventh day, after the pollution was contracted, a clean person, dipping a bunch of hyssop in the purifying liquor, was to sprinkle the unclean. And on the evening of the seventh day, but not before, he was perfectly cleansed. Let the clean person be an emblem of the ministers of the gospel, who have the precious treasure of Christ's purifying blood and Spirit as it were in earthen vessels. These ought (at least) to be clean persons, and an example in purity to the believers among whom they minister. Let the bunch of hyssop represent the ordinances of the gospel, or faith, both which are the applying means. The third day was the time of the first sprinkling. We may here take occasion to think, that on the third day Chirst rose again from the dead: and here indeed began our purging from guilt, for he was raised for our justification. On the seventh day, the last of a weekly revolution, the purification was complete on the evening. Nor will we be perfectly cleansed from the inherance of moral stains

till the evening of death, and the commencement of the eternal Sabbath. Thus shall he sprinkle, not a small number of Israelites, but many nations; not merely from the impurities of the flesh, but from the pollutions of the conscience. Though we are defiled not only with smaller transgressions, but with the most deadly and abominable iniquities; or, to use the Old-Testament phrases, tho' we have not only touched, but remained among the graves, and lodged in the monuments; yet if we come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, we shall be clean through the word that he has spoken unto us.

The danger of neglecting this ordinance was no less than excision from the congregation of the Lord. So shall they perish as the vilest part of the creation, who say they are not polluted, when the judgment of unerring wisdom about all the children of men, is, They are altogether become filthy:* or who, turning away disdainful from the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness think to wash out their stains by the nitre and soap of their own endeavours: for God shall plunge them into the ditch, and their own cloaths shall abhor them.†

One other circumstance deserves to be noticed before we leave this subject. The very same water that sanctified the unclean, defiled the man who touched or sprinkled it, though he was clean before. Perhaps this might denote the imperfection of these

* Psal. liii. 3. † Job. ix. 31.

shadows, which never could make them perfect by whom they were used; or it might intimate, that the virtue of divine institutions depends not on the person that ministers about them. Or shall we say, that faith in Christ's blood, like this consecrated water, defiles them that are clean, by discovering more of their natural pollution; and cleanses them that are defiled, by sprinkling their hearts from an evil conscience? But it is certain, the effects of this water were not more contrary, than these of Christ himself, as preached in the gospel, who is to some the savour of life, and to others the savour of death.

XII. The ORDINANCE of the Year of JUBILE.

THE institution of the jubile was none of the least remarkable regulations in the commonwealth of Israel, and deserves our special attention. Besides the rest which the land enjoyed every seventh, it was ordained to rest also every fiftieth year. The husbandman was forbid to subdue his field with the plough, or to scatter his seed in the furrows.—What the earth spontaneously produced, whether corn or vines, might be indifferently used by all, and was the special property of the poor inhabitants of the land. The God who commanded this, was fully able to compensate the want of harvest and vintage, by crowning the year preceding with uncommon plenty. But besides the intermission of servile labour in this extraordinary year, it was the will of God, that by its welcome approach, the poor

Israelite should reap great advantages, and enjoy very valuable immunities. The insolvent debtor was delivered from his creditor. The hired servant regained his former liberty, and inheritances reverted to the families to which they originally belonged. The joyful sound of trumpets announced the commencement of this year of liberty; and they were blown on the day of atonement, when they were fasting for their sins, and afflicting their souls. This was the fast which the Lord did chuse, to undo heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free. In short, it was a time of the restitution of all things in the commonwealth, and a remedy against the caprice of fortune, or rather the inequalities which sovereign providence introduces among men as to their outward state.

Several things might be suggested, to evince the propriety of this regulation, viewed in a civil as well as a religious light. It was admirably well calculated to promote brotherly love; to prevent the ruin of families, whether by avarice or prodigality; to preserve the distinction of tribes, till Messias should come; and to impress upon their hearts a sense of their absolute dependence upon God, as their great landlord, whose property the land was, and with whom they were strangers and sojourners: therefore it was to be sold only for a time, and not for ever.

But let us raise our thoughts still higher to the year of grace and day of salvation, wherein far

greater immunities are proclaimed to the human race, than were announced to the Israelites by the trumpet of the jubile. Detesting the impious imitation of this sacred ordinance in the pretended jubile of Rome, let us take occasion to meditate on that happy season, which, in allusion to this very thing, is stiled by the prophet, the year of God's redeemed, and the acceptable year of the Lord. Joyful was the sound of liberty to the poor Israelite who was drowned in debt, for which he was obliged to part with his beloved freedom, and to sell the inheritance of his fathers. But more joyful is the sound of liberty to the wretched sinner, who is deep in arrears to the divine justice, a miserable captive of sin and wrath, and utterly deprived of all inheritance in the heavenly kingdom. O blessed are the people that know this joyful sound! they shall walk, O Lord, in the brightness of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted![*] But a more particular attention to what Moses informs us about this grand festival, will discover unto us the resemblance betwixt the trumpet of the Jubile, and the trumpet of the gospel, whose sound, far from being confined to Judea alone, is gone through all the earth, of which the prophet Esaias, rapt into future times, utters that glorious prophecy, which has received its accomplishment in the days of the Messiah: And it shall come to pass, that the great trumpet shall be

[*] Psal. lxxxix. 15, 16.

blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.*

The time when this glad signal was given by the solemn sound of trumpets, was the tenth day of the seventh month, or the day of atonement; a day wherein the future expiation of the Messiah was clearly exhibited, in the goat that was slain, and in the goat that was sent away, and in other ceremonies truly significant and expressive. A circumstance this greatly to be observed. Who sees not here, that our jubile begins in the atonement of Jesus Christ, as theirs began in the day in which it was prefigured? The trumpet that was not sounded on this day, was some other than the jubile-trumpet; and the sermon that is not built on the doctrine of atonement, is something different from the gospel. O Jesus, were it not for thy bloody death, thy glorious resurrection, and still more glorious ascension, our ears had never heard the gospel-trumpet's joyful sound; nor of the gifts which thou received for men, far surpassing the gifts and immunities of this gladsome year!

The intermission of toil and labour, in this Sabbatical year, wherein the land was not tilled, and the common property which every one had in the spontaneous productions of the earth, may be considered as an emblem of that blessed rest which is proclaim-

* Is. xxvii. 13.

ed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, from the works of the law & of the flesh, & from anxious carking cares about the good things of this present life. He that feeds the ravens without their labour, and clothes the lilies without their toil, will certainly with-hold no necessary things from the objects of his choice regard. The joyful sound forbids you to ask with painful anxiety, What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewith shall we be cloathed?* Leave him who knows your wants to answer these perplexing questions. Be careful for nothing,† is a chearful note sent from the gospel trumpet. Hear it, ye happy people, who know the joyful sound, and turn your timorous cares into believing confidence!

The cancelling of debts at this happy season, may well be viewed as an emblem of the forgiveness of sin, or that dreadful debt of punishment, which all the human race owe to eternal justice, the most inexorable of all creditors. This debt we are born under, and are every day contracting more. It is marked every farthing in the book of God's remembrance, and the time of final reckoning is hasting apace. Miserable they whom that awful day shall find without a Surety. How can we discharge it, who are not able so much as to number it? But these are the charming accents of the gospel-jubile, I, even I am he that blotteth out your sins.‡ Dismiss your fears, ye poor insolvent debtors; for there is forgiveness with your great Creditor, and for the

* Matth. vi. 31. † Philip. iv. 6. ‡ Isa. xliii. 25.

sake of his dear Son, he will not enter into judgment with you.

The release of servants, and delivering from bondage, is another joyful sound of the acceptable year of the Lord: a privilege so much more glorious than the liberty of the Israelites, as the slavery from which we are redeemed is more miserable than the service to which they bound themselves. The gospel is a joyful sound of liberty from the bondage of God's wrath, which we are taught to dread no more with servile fear, but with a filial reverence;—from the bondage of Satan's tyranny, that we may no more be led captive at the will and pleasure of that wicked spirit;—from the fear of death, which has subjected many to bondage all the days of their life. It is a sound of freedom from the law, not indeed as it is a rule of life, (for the obligations to all sorts of religious and civil duties is strongly corroborated by the gospel,) but as it is a covenant of works. A severe and rigorous master indeed! which accepts no work, if it is not absolutely perfect; which never readmits into favour, those who, in the smallest instance, have incurred its displeasure, though they should never be so solicitous to do all in their power to please it. Eternal death is the smallest punishment it will be satisfied to inflict, and obedience absolutely perfect the only condition of acceptance. They who are under the dominion of this rigid Lord, (and such are all the race of Adam before the gospel comes,) can never hope to attain everlasting life, or

escape everlasting death; for one sin, though ever so small, will do them more harm, than all their duties, how many soever, can do them good. But we must not forget to mention how the gospel is a joyful sound of liberty and freedom from the domineering power of sin, and the lusts of our hearts, which, though divers, and often contrary, demand full homage, and perfect gratification. Betwixt the bondage of the law, and the bondage of sin, there is a most indissoluble relation, though one would not think so at first view. But the great apostle expressly affirms, that the strength of sin is the law;* and makes our not being under the law, but under grace, a reason why sin should not have the dominion over us.† Be it so, that serving divers lusts and pleasures is not esteemed by many as an intolerable thraldom, but, on the contrary, they think it a state of liberty to the servants of corruption. They are not the only madmen who glory in their chains, mistaking them for real ornaments. A most unquestionable judge of human nature has taught us, that he who commits sin, is the servant of sin.‡ A saint of the first magnitude affirms, that to seek God's precepts, is to walk at liberty.‖ And who has not heard the dismal groans of the blessed apostle, which the body of sin and death extorted from the bottom of his heart?§ O sin, what an imperious lord art thou! and thy service of all others the most ignominious,

* 1 Cor. xv 56 † Rom. vi. 14. ‡ John vii. 34.
‖ Psal. cxix. 45. § Rom. vii. 24.

the most laborious, and the the most unprofitable; for the wages of sin is death.* But the gospel-trumpet says to the prisoners, Go forth; and to them in darkness, Shew yourselves:† and when they know the truth, the truth shall make them free.

The reversion of inheritances is the last thing we shall notice. We lost our inheritance by the first moral transgression, and we are every day resigning more and more our claim to the divine favour, for the transitory pleasures of sin. We have sold for nought the invaluable treasures of eternity, and are by no means able to redeem what we have so foolishly foregone. But these are the glad tidings of the everlasting gospel. In Jesus Christ, O ye children of men, you may obtain an inheritance infinitely more valuable than what returned to an Israelite at the year of liberty; an inheritance of exceeding glorious riches, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. The blood of Christ is the price that bought it; the Spirit is the earnest that secures it. And when the Redeemer comes again, they shall perfectly enjoy the purchased possession: for the Lord knows the days of the righteous, and their inheritance endureth for ever.‡

Happy they who hear by faith the trumpet of the gospel jubile, in this accepted time; who look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein! In the decisive hour of judgment, the trump of God

* Rom. vi. 23. † Isa. xlix. 9. ‡ Psal. xxxvii. 18

itself shall not affright; and even in this present state, they shall be brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; they shall lead them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors.

XIII. THE LAW OF THE LEPER.

THE law of the Leper, which is delivered by the Hebrew lawgiver with considerable prolixity, is indeed a proportion of sacred writ we are apt to skim over with heedless glance, supposing that very little instruction can be derived from such antiquated usages, as were to be observed about the discovery, the separation, and the cleansing of their infected Israelite. One is apt to wonder at the distemper itself, which infected not only the bodies of men, but their garments and houses; and to be no less surprised; that the heavenly Majesty should condescend to give such minute directions about the symptoms of the leprosy, and the manner of cleansing. But when we consider that every thing almost about the typical nation was figurative, their diseases not excepted, perhaps we may cease to wonder, and willingly acknowledge, that here, as in other ancient rites, the body is of Christ.

It was a cutaneous distemper, well known to the Jews, and, as they say, to other nations in those parts of the world. Though in itself was only a natural evil, it was however, inflicted oftentimes

by the immediate hand of the Lord, as the punishment of sin, as in the case of Miriam, Gehazi, and king Uzziah. That it was always an indication of any flagrant guilt, we will not presume to say. But the unhappy patient, who was seized with that hateful malady, was, by the divine law, excluded from the cheerful society of men, and from access to the tabernacle of God, till it should please God to recover him, or at least till the symptoms of recovery were perceived by the priest by whom the sentence was pronounced. But let us take a more exact view both of the disease, and the manner of its purgation.

Was the Almighty displeased with the leprosy? was his indignation against the poor leper? Nay, he dispises no man for the affliction of his body, however lothsome. A Lazarus covered with sores, and a Job with boils, are the objects of his special love; while the most wealthy sinner that wears the finest purple, is a vile person in his eyes. Sin is that lothsome disease, and the sinner, that abominable leper, here described. Behold, I am vile, I am a man of unclean lips, I abhor myself,* is the language of the convinced soul. An infant wallowing in the blood of its nativity, and a sow wallowing in the mire, a dog returning to his vomit, and a sepulchre exhaling the stench of a putrifying carcase, are not greater nuisances to the sense, than the soul that lies in sin, to the pure eyes of God. Sin is that abhorred leprosy which spreads its dire contageon

* Job. xl. 4. and xlii. 6. Is. vi. 5.

far and wide, infecting all the duties which the sinner can perform, and all the comforts that he tastes; for to him that is defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure.* Beware how you approach the society of the wicked, a thousand times more infectious than the company of the filthiest leper. O my soul, be not united to their assembly that are the workers of iniquity, if thou wouldst keep the commandment of thy God! He that was infected with the typical leprosy, was not only in danger of defiling those with whom he conversed, but the very garments he wore, and the house in which he dwelt. But sin has subjected all creatures to the bondage of corruption.—Therefore it is revealed, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and all these things shall be dissolved;† as the infected garment was burned with fire, and the infected house demolished from its very foundation. The leper under the law was excluded from the society of men; and when the distemper came to a great height, or infected the head, he was to use the signals of deepest mourning; his cloaths were to be rent, his head bare, and a covering upon his upper lip, and as he went, he was to cry, Unclean! unclean! But the leprosy of sin excludes the miserable soul from all intercourse with God, communion with angels, fellowship with Jesus, society with the spirits of just men, and access to the heavenly Jerusalem, where nothing that is defiled can enter. O dismal solitude! O terrible sep-

* Tit. i. 15. †2 Pet. iii. 10, 11.

aration! With what tears shall it be deplored! What tokens of mourning are deep enough to express the melancholy state! And, alas! we speak not of a malady that is rarely to be found. It is hereditary to all the sons of Adam without exception; for they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no not one.* How can he be clean that is born of a woman?†

No wonder the priest was injoined to proceed with extraordinary caution, in inspecting the symptoms of this hateful distemper, when so much depended upon the sentence he should pronounce. A person was not to be pronounced unclean on a sudden, nor upon every slight symptom of leprosy that might have appeared in his flesh; for the suspected Israelite was to be shut up seven days, and on the seventh day to be judged according as the symptoms were favourable or malignant. This surely was designed to inculcate the extraordinary caution wherewith the office-bearers in the church, as well as others, ought to try the spirits, and separate the precious from the vile; and that no man's state should be deemed bad, unless there are most evident tokens of sin having the dominion over him. Every man who had in his skin a spot, freckle, or blister, was not to be judged a leper. Nor must we say of every sin of infirmity, It is not the spot of his children: for in many things we offend all.‡ Again, a man whose hair fell off his head or forehead, through

* Psal. liii. 3. † Job. xxv. 4. ‡ James iii. 2.

the decay of nature, or otherwise, though he was bald, yet he was not a leper. Nor are they all in a state of sin, the vigour of whose spiritual life is much abated, and who, alas! have left their first love. Yea, though an Israelite was actually seized with a leprosy, if there were tokens that it was not gaining upon nature, but that nature was expelling it, as suppose the plague was not in sight deeper than the skin, or if it spread not in the skin, or if the plague was somewhat dark, and there were black hairs in the rising, or if it covered all the skin from head to foot wheresoever the priest looked; in any of these cases he was not pronounced unclean: for these were favourable symptoms that the distemper had not infected the vitals; that the whole mass of blood was not corrupted; and that nature was still strong, and working out the contagion. No more must we conclude, that they are all in a bad state, who may take up the pitiful complaint of David, My loins are filled with a lothsome disease, & there is no soundness in my flesh.* The leper, whose plague is not in sight deeper than the skin, is he whose life may indeed be stained with some external blemishes; but he sins not with all his heart, which is still sound in God's statutes. The leper, whose plague spreads not in the skin, but was at a stay, is he who emerges from his fall, like David or Peter, by a speedy repentance. Their sin was but a scab: they washed their cloaths in the blood of Christ, and were clean.

* Psal. xxxviii, 7.

The leper, whose plague was somewhat dark, and the hairs not turned white, (a sure sign of the strength of nature), is he who has a principle of life and strength within him, that never can be subdued by the strongest efforts of sin, but shall prevail at the last. The leper, who was all turned white in every part, from head to foot, (a sign that the distemper was expelled from the vitals to the external parts, and that the cure was as good as wrought), is he who has obtained an evangelical conviction of his natural pollution in heart and life, that he is altogether become filthy ;* and that in him, that is, in his flesh, there dwells no good thing.†

But, on the other hand, the bad symptoms were such as these. If the hair in the plague was turned white ; if the plague was in sight deeper than the skin of his flesh ; if there was quick raw flesh in the rising ; and if it spread itself further and further in the skin. And the worst of all kinds was the leprosy in the head : The priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean ; his plague is in his head.‡ He that had white and yellow hair in the sore of his leprosy, is the sinner who has no strength to oppose any temptation, and can make no resistance at all to the lusts of his own heart : for white hairs are signs of the debility of nature, and that death is fast approaching. "Grey hairs," saith the prophet Hosea, are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not.§

* Psal. liii. 3. † Rom. vii. 18. ‡ Lev. xiii. 44.
§ Hos. vii. 9.

And saith the Lord God in Ezekiel, How weak is thine heart, seeing thou dost all these things ?*

He whose leprosy was in sight deeper than the skin, is an emblem of the sinner who works wickedness with full consent, and from the very bottom of his soul, whose transgression proclaims, that his heart is not right in the sight of God, & to whom the words of the prophet may be addressed, This thy wickedness is bitter ; it reacheth unto thine heart.† He that had quick raw flesh in the rising of his plague, may perhaps denote the sinner who cannot endure to be touched or reprimanded for his fault, though in the gentlest manner. This is a dangerous symptom indeed ! David,this was not thy spot: Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness ; let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil,which shall not break my head.‡ He whose plague did spread in the skin, is the sinner who waxes worse and worse, and increases unto more ungodliness.—And, lastly, the man, whose plague was in his head, is the sinner, the faults of whose life proceed from the errors of his mind ; whose understanding is debauched by his will, and he is arrived at such a pitch of wickedness, as to vindicate himself in the gratification of his lusts, and even to glory in his shame. He is utterly unclean, and hardly, very hardly, shall his cure be ever effected. But the rites of cleansing demand our next attention.

When it pleased God, who sent this doleful

* Ezek. xvi. 30. † Jer. iv, 18. ‡ Psal. cxli. 5.

plague, to remove it again, the leper was fetched to the priest, or rather the priest unto the leper; and when, upon a narrow scrutiny, it appeared the cure was really wrought, he was pronounced clean; but not without practising various purging ceremonies on the first, the seventh, and the eighth day. Jesus Christ is that priest to whom the leprous soul is brought, or rather who hath condescended to come to us, who could not go to him, because we were polluted in our blood without the camp, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. He is come, not merely to cleanse them, who are already healed, like the legal priest, but to heal them who, without his helping hand, were absolutely incurable. The Israelite, who was brought for cleansing to the priest, was himself to provide the necessary oblations, not without some cost and toil. But the High Priest of good things to come, demands no such conditions from those who come for healing to their souls: himself has laid out the necessary charges, and has, by the one offering of himself for us, for ever perfected all them who are sanctified. But let us more narrowly attend to the ceremonies of cleansing, in the order wherein they were performed.

On the first day of the leper's appearance before the priest, the priest was to take for him two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop, to make with them a sprinkling instrument. An earthen vessel was filled with running water, over

which one of the birds was to be killed, and the other bird, together with the sprinkling instrument, being dipt in the bloody water, the leper was to be sprinkled with it seven times, and the bird let loose into the open field. And the leper, though pronounced clean by the priest, was notwithstanding to cleanse himself still more, by washing his cloathes, shaving his hair, and bathing his body. And after that he was permitted to come into the camp; but he was to tarry abroad out of his tent seven days. Some have thought, and perhaps not without some reason, that the materials which were to be procured on this occasion, might be expressive of that wholesome state on which the leper was now to enter. Before he was in a manner dead, but now restored to life, which might be signified by the living birds. Before he was putrefying, and in a state of corruption, but now vigorous and robust, signified by the cedar. Before he was pale and wan, but now of a lively brisk complexion, signified by the scarlet. Before he was nauseous to the smell, but now cured of his ill cent, signified by the hyssop. But what hinders us to think of still greater mysteries, and to lift our thoughts to the purging of our sins by our great High Priest? The two birds alive and clean, may denote the two natures of Jesus Christ. The human nature was put to death, but the divine nature was incapable of suffering. By the human nature he died for our offences, and by the divine nature he rose again for our justification. The sprinkling instrument of cedar,

scarlet, and hyssop, may signify the ordinances of the gospel, by which the blessings of Christ's death are communicated. The running is the Spirit of Christ, who is always imparted to the heart, when the blood is sprinkled on the conscience. The earthen ve sel is an emblem of the ministers of Christ, who, though frail and brittle creatures, and despicable in the eye of the world, and some but of small capacity and size, are intrusted with this invaluable treasure of gospel-grace, to be dispensed unto others. And whereas the priest was to kill one of the birds, this intimates, that without shedding of blood is no remission.* He was to dip the living bird in the blood of the dead one; this imports, that the blood of Christ's humanity is, by the hypostatical union, the blood of his divinity, or the blood of God, which is the very thing that renders it the blood of atonement. The sprinkling instrument of cedar, scarlet, and hyssop, was to be dipt in the same blood: for all the ordinances, and all the means of salvation, are sanctified by the blood of Christ alone. In this blood, if we may be allowed the expression, must ministers dip their sermons, if they would be profitable to men; & in this blood must Christians dip their good works, if they expect them to be acceptable unto God. The sprinkling the leper seven times, signifies that perfect cleanness which is, by the blood of sprinkling, introduced into the conscience, and which the royal penitent so pathetically breathes af-

* Heb. ix. 22.

ter, Wash me, and I shall be clean; sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be whiter than snow.*—— The dismission of the other bird into the open field, may perhaps denote the resurrection of the Son of God, or that his divine nature was untouched by death. Or, as the living bird received its liberty when dipt in the blood of the dead one; so we are made to know the power of his resurrection, by the fellowship of his sufferings, and may truly say, Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler.† The leper, thus sprinkled according to the ordinance, though pronounced clean by the priest, was required to shave his hair, and wash himself and his clothes in water, that he might be clean; which was not only a precaution to prevent relapse, though any relicts of the distemper lurking in his hair or garments, but may also point forth to us this momentous truth, that our being sprinkled by our High Priest with the clean water of his blood, does not at all supersede the cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. There is no person who partakes this glorious privilege, who endeavors not, as his duty to purify himself, to lay aside all superfluity of naughtiness, to put off the old man, and to hate even the garment spotted with the flesh, by having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Nor are his purifying endeavours to be intermitted, but persisted in all the days of his life, as the leper was to repeat on the seventh

* Psal. li. 7. † Psal. cxxiv. 7.

day the ceremonies of shaving and washing; for sanctification is a gradual and progressive work, that shall not be completed till the week of this mortal life is fulfilled. Such were the ceremonies of the first and of the seventh day.

On the eighth day, three lambs were to be fetched for a trespass-offering, a sin-offering, and a burnt-offering, a quantity of fine flour for a meet-offering, and one log of oil. If he was not able to afford such costly offerings, the Lord accepted such as he was able to get, which are also condescended upon in the law. These sacrifices, being presented, together with the leper, before the Lord, were to be offered in the usual manner. But the blood of the trespass-offering, was, by a peculiar ceremony, to be applied to the extreme parts of the leper's body, the tip of his right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the great toe of his right foot. Above the blood the oil was to be applied in the same manner, and the overplus poured upon his head who was to be cleansed. These sacrifices, without all doubt, had the same general meaning as other sacrifices; and the peculiar ceremonies were doubtless very significant: as if the priest had said to the leper, "I put this blood and this oil on your ear, now you are free to hear the word of God in any synagogue: I put it on your thumb, now you may handle any thing, and not defile it: I put them on your toe, now you may go where you please, and men will not avoid your society." But what forbids us to think of still higher

mysteries? These particular parts of the body may signify the preceptive and executive faculties, in both which we offend, and for both which we need the great propitiation.* Was not this the language of that solemn rite? "Now you are made clean, let all your faculties and powers be devoted to the service of God. Let your ears be open to the commands of God. Let the works of your hands be established and accepted by him. Let your footsteps be ordered in his word." The oil that was put upon the blood, most certainly signifies the Holy Ghost, as a spirit of sanctification. By the blood of his merit, he forgives all iniquities; and by the oil of his Spirit, he heals all our diseases. By the first we are justified; by the second we are sanctified. By the one, sin shall not condemn, to suffer the punishment it deserves; and by the other, it shall not command, to obey the orders it gives. And whereas the remnant of the oil in the priest's hand was to be poured on his head that was cleansed, this most undoubtedly prefigured the shedding of the Holy Ghost on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. It is said in one place, Ye have an unction from the Holy One;† and in another, He who hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.‡

How foolish a part had that Israelite acted, who had contented himself with making applications to the physician, without having to the priest for cleans-

* Hervey, vol. I. Dial. 3. † 1 John ii. 20. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

ing of his leprosy! Alas! the balm in Gilead could not supply the place of the sacrificial blood. Nor do they act a wiser part, who seek to the physicians of their own legal endeavours for the cure of their leprosy, but not unto Jesus Christ, the High Priest, who stands ready with his hyssop & blood. Can the rivers of Damascus compare with the waters of Israel? Bring us, O Lord to the Jordan of thy grace for cleansing these leprous souls! Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make us clean.* O sprinkle us with hyssop, and we shall be whiter than the snow.†

XIV. THE LAW of the NEAR KINSMAN.

IT is not for nought the near kinsman among the Jews, and the Lord himself, are alike denominated in the original language of the Hebrews.—Why should the name Goel be common to him that acted the kinsman's part among the Jews, and to the God of Israel, if there were not a great resemblance betwixt the kindly offices of the one and the gracious benefits of the other? And the propriety of this observation will more evidently appear from an induction of particulars. For what the earthly Goel, or nearest blood-relation was enjoined to do for his brother under the law, the heavenly Goel, that is, the all-gracious Redeemer, hath done, in the most eminent manner, for sinners of the human race under the gospel. If an Israelite died without chil-

* Matth. viii. 2. † Psal. li. 7.

dren, the Goel was to marry his widow, to raise up seed unto his brother, that his name might not perish. If, through poverty, he had sold away his possesson, the Goel was to buy back his inheritance. If, for the same reason, he had sold himself for a servant to another man, the Goel was to redeem him from his master. And, lastly, If an Israelite was murdered, his Goel was to avenge his blood, by bringing the wilful murderer to suffer condign punishment. Waving the political reason of these laws, we shall confine ourselves to their allegorical interpretation: for on all these accounts, the believer, in the promised Messiah, may say of him with Job, I know my Goel liveth.*

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not left us this day without a Kinsman, to marry and raise up the seed of good works unto our barren nature. Once she was fruitful unto God before the breach of the first covenant; but now, alas! the image of God she wore at first is miserably defaced; her husband the law is become dead and weak through the flesh, and she can bring forth no children unto God, that is, can produce no action that bears resemblance unto him, or corresponds to the demands of the law. Sin and death, these are the only births of corrupt nature; and we may truly say of all men in their unrenewed state, They conceive mischief, they bring forth falsehood, and their belly prepareth deceit.† At best they can only say, We have labour-

* Job. xix. 25. † Job. xv. 35.

ed, we have been in pain, we have brought forth wind.* But the loving Kinsman consented to marry this barren nature, by assuming a true body and a reasonable soul, its two essential parts, into a personal union with himself, and by uniting with himself, in a mystical union, a great number of individuals of our race. It is true, the match was most unequal, and huge difficulties were to be surmounted, before the marriage could be solemnized, and the bride prepared for her husband. But his love was stronger than death itself, and we are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we might be married to another husband, even to him that was raised from the dead, that the barren woman might keep house, and become a joyful mother of children. Now that our Maker is our Husband, she that was barren hath born seven, and the promise is accomplished, Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house, her children like olive-plants round about thy table.† We may truly affirm of all the happy souls that are espoused to the one Husband, "Every one beareth twins," the love of God and his neighbour, and none is barren among them.‡ These children are indeed the heritage of the Lord, and this fruit of the womb his reward: happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.§ Here am I, will he say in the great day of the Lord, & the children whom thou hast given me.‖

* Is. xxvi 18. † Psal. xxviii. 3. ‡ Song iv. 2.
§ Psal. cxxvii. 3. 5. ‖ Heb. ii. 13.

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not left us without a Kinsman to redeem the mortgaged inheritance of everlasting life, which, alas! we sold away for one morsel of forbidden fruit, but are not able to buy back again by all the money of our obedience or sufferings. None of our kin were able to pay the price. For all men being equally involved in the same ruin, none of them could redeem his brother: and angels, though glorious and perfect creatures, yet needed all their holiness for themselves; and had they undertook to pay our debt, they would have, like the kinsman in Ruth, but married their own inheritance. But, lo! what men and angels could not have done, the Son of God, clothed in flesh and blood, hath completely effected. The ransom was paid down in the liquid gold of his precious blood to the utmost farthing of the legal demand. Now heaven is a purchased possession; and by thy poverty we are become rich, O gracious Redeemer, who for our sakes becamest poor, though the silver and the gold is thine.

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not left us without a Kinsman, to redeem not only the inheritance to us, but us to the inheritance: for being reduced to the most abject poverty by the loss of original righteousness, and communion with God, we sold ourselves, like the prodigal son in the parable, to the most sordid slavery of the devil; sold ourselves for a wretched sustenance, the husks that swine do eat. From this inglorious servitude we could not

by any means have extricated ourselves, except the Kinsman, the Redeemer had come to Zion; had taken upon him the form of a servant, and given himself a ransom for all. Such was the hard condition of our rescue; but in his love and in his pity he redeemed us, who had sold ourselves for nought: for with the Lord is plenteous redemption, and he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not left us without a Kinsman to be the avenger of our blood, when the prince of the rebellious angels had massacred the human race in the loins of their great progenitor. That wicked spirit, stung with fierce resentment against the avenging God, and stimulated with envy against innocent and happy man, seduced him to fall off from his Creator, and to partake of his revolt. Thus he was a murderer from the beginning, not only of our bodies, which are, by his means, subjected unto the first death, but of our souls, that are naturally dead in trespasses and sins, and liable to everlasting vengeance, which is the second death. The holy and righteous law of God was, shall we say, the city of refuge to which he fled. He boasted, Shall the prey be taken from the mighty? shall the lawful captive be delivered?† For having in some sense the power of death, the sting of which was sin, and the strength of sin was the law, what mere creature was able to enter into the palace of this strong armed Apollyon, and spoil him of his

* Psal. cxxx, 7, 8. † Is. xlix, 24.

armour? Whoever enters on this arduous enterprise, he must be able to unsting death, by satisfying the law. Here then let us adopt the sublime rapture of the prophet, The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as with a cloak.* Or shall we use the stile of the New-Testament apostle, when speaking of this very thing? Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.† The Redeemer has died, the Redeemer has risen again; O Satan, where is thy power? O death, where is thy sting? For though the sting of death is sin, and though the strength of sin is the law, thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.‡ The glorious Avenger of our blood has not only punished the murderer, (which is all that man can do for his slaughtered brother); but has restored life to the murdered, that in their own persons they may overcome the wicked one. Thus has he redeemed their soul from deceit and violence, and precious has their blood been in his sight.

* Is. lix. 15. 16. 17. † Heb. ii. 14. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 56. 57.

XV. THE HOLY NATION OF ISRAEL.

WHEN the knowledge of the true God was lost among the degenerate nations, the family of Abraham was chosen to be the repository of that most invaluable treasure. It was promised in solemn manner to this venerable patriarch, that he should have a numerous progeny, and a peculiar seed, that should become a universal blessing to the world. In process of time he was the progenitor of a mighty nation, divided into twelve tribes; who being for a long time the only visible society where God was worshiped, were distinguished from other people with very high appellations, and valuable priviliges. They are stiled in the Old Testament, a peculiar treasure,* a kingdom of priests,† and a holy nation,‡ the inheritance,§ the vineyard,‖ the congregation,¶ the tribes of the Lord of hosts,** and his first-born son.†† To them pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God and the promises. Theirs were the fathers, and from them the Messias himself was to spring according to the flesh.‡‡ This famous nation, after many vicissitudes of fortune, were at last, for the horrid crime of rejecting and murdering the Messiah, disinherited by the offended God of their fathers, divested of all their glorious privileges, ejected from the land of promise, and are become miserable wanderers among the nations.

* Exod. xix. 5. † vers. 6 ‡ ibid. § Deut. xxxii. 19.
‖ Psal. lxxx. 15. ¶ Psal lxxiv. 2. ** Psal. cxxii. 4.
†† Exod. iv. 22. ‡‡ Rom. ix. 4. 5.

What shall we say then to these things? Has God cast away his people? Is there no Israel now to be found, among whom his name is great? Yes; though Israel, according to the flesh, is no more the people of God, still there is a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, a true circumcision, that worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh. The sinners of the Gentiles, who were once polluted as dogs, stupid as stones, are now, by the power of divine grace, become the children of Abraham, and the true Israel of God. John saw the Christian Israel sealed in his mysterious vision, of every tribe a select number. And the twelve apostles of the Lamb are said, in a prophetic stile, to sit on twelve thrones, and judge the twelve apostate tribes of Israel, when they became the spiritual fathers of the holy Christian nation, of which Israel, according to the flesh, was a figure. Let us see where the resemblance lies.

And, first, We may observe the smallness of their beginning. They were once but few in number, the fewest of all people, as their lawgiver told them. Though afterwards they received a prodigious increase, they descended from twelve men, who sprung from one as good as dead, that was called being alone. Exactly so, the Gentile church, though a great multitude that no man can number, are the spiritual children of the twelve apostles, who sprung from one that was actually dead, though he lives for evermore. Though the beginning of the gospel

church was small, like a grain of seed, or a little leaven, yet its latter end did greatly increase.

Secondly, The number of their enemies deserves our attention. This ancient people were never without enemies of one sort or other, in Egypt, in the wilderness, and even in Canaan itself. The church of Christ has always, in this state of warfare, her Egypt, her Amalek, her Edom, her Moab, her Philistines, and her Babylon. This last being the most eminent foe of the ancient race of Israel, is viewed, in the prophetic book of the New Testament, as a figure of the malignant church, or Antichristian state, the most formidable adversary of the true church since the ascension of our Lord. And truly, the prophetic descriptions of ancient Babylon, by whose rivers the melancholy captives of Israel sat down & wept, are with the most evident propriety applied by the New Testament prophet to that powerful, that wealthy, that idolatrous, that persecuting church of Rome, that sits on the many waters of kindreds, & nations, & people, and tongues. Though, like the ancient Babylon, her predecessor and type, she should defy all danger, live deliciously, and boast she is a queen, and no widow, and shall not know the loss of children; yet, at the appointed time, the cry of her destruction, her final, her total destruction shall be heard; Daughter of Babylon, near to destruction, blessed shall he be that rewards thee, as thou hast done unto us.*

* Psal. cxxxvii. 8.

The eminent deliverances of Israel is the next thing we shall notice. Though they were an afflicted nation from the beginning, lying among the pots, travelling through the floods, traversing the wilderness, weeping by Babel's streams; yet happy wast thou, O Israel, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thine excellency.* The house of bondage could not detain them; the waters of the sea could not overflow them; the wilderness could not famish them; and Babylon could not hold them in captivity. Who knows not, that these illustrious works of God in behalf of the chosen seed, are sung in lofty numbers by the inspired penmen, in phrases that describe the common salvation, and the redemption of the world from still more dreadful foes? And the illustrious persons, who, under God, atchieved the several rescues of ancient Israel, are spoke of, in the prophets, in phrases that may be well adapted to the Messiah himself.

The singularity of their laws and customs, which were, by Heaven's appointment, divers from all people, was no doubt intended to adumbrate that distinguishing sanctity, so different from the fashions of this world, which ought to adorn the holy Christian nation. The Jews of old were not more ridiculed by their scornful neighbors, for the seeming oddity of their national usages, than the peculiar people of Christ have been in every age, for their zealous attachment to the divine law, and because they were not conformed to this world.

* Deut. xxxiii. 29.

But a principal thing for which the Jewish nation was a typical people, is the glorious national privileges they possessed, the chief of which we shall mention. To them belonged the adoption to be God's first-born son, or the election to be his peculiar people: a privilege that exalted them high above all nations, and yet was not conferred upon them because of their own worthiness or excellency, of whatever kind, but solely because it was the good pleasure of God to bestow this glorious dignity upon them. Even so, the election and adoption of the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, arises from the same source, the good pleasure of his will, and purpose in grace; not of works, least any man should boast. To them belonged the glorious symbols of the divine presence, as the holy temple, the sacred fire, and the bright cloud of the sanctuary; though by degrees these shadows vanished, as the body approached. What nation was so great, to have the Lord so near them in the visible tokens of his presence? None but that holy nation, whose prerogative it is to behold the glory of the incarnate Word, God manifested in the flesh. To them belonged the law or covenant of works, ordained in the hand of Moses, as a mediator betwixt God and them. So to the Christian church belongs the law or covenant of works, ordained in the hand of Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man. Their mediator could not fulfil the law for them; they brake

the covenant, and God regarded them not. But Christ hath magnified the law, and made it honourable, by a most complete satisfaction and meritorious obedience. To them belonged a civil government, modelled by God himself; for their state was a theocracy, and the Lord said unto them, I will be thy King.* Exactly so, the laws of the New Testament kingdom are all enacted by him that sits upon the throne; nor must the ordinances of men claim homage from the subjects of Jesus Christ, except in so far as they comport with his positive institutions. To them belonged the service of God, according to these rites which himself prescribed. An emblem of that reasonable and acceptable service which appertains to the true church, and which is found no where but among the societies of Christian worshippers. To them pertained the promises of rest in Canaan the pleasant land, and of victory over the devoted nations. So to the Christian church belongs the promise of everlasting life, and final rest in the better heavenly country, to recompence their wanderings through the mazy wilderness of this world; and the promise of complete victory over the nations of spiritual foes, the lusts that war in their earthly members: a more glorious honour this, than to storm a city! as, He that ruleth over his own spirit is better than the mighty.† This honour have all his saint.‡

* Hos. xiii. 10. † Prov. xvi. 32. ‡ Psal. cxlix. 9.

Here let us end—adoring the riches of that divine goodness, in bringing nigh, by the blood of his dear Son, those that were far off, Gentiles in the uncircumcision of their flesh, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel—trembling at the severity of divine justice towards that sinful nation, who are now as much depressed below all other people, as once they were exalted above them. Let us recollect the apostle's necessary admonition: Because of unbelief they were broken off, and by faith we stand. Be not high minded, but fear.* Happy they who are endowed with this noble grace! Such are Israelites indeed, though Abraham be ignorant of them, and Israel according to the flesh acknowledge them not.† For if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.‡

XVI. THE VICTORY OVER THE NATIONS OF CANAAN.

BEFORE the tribes of the Lord could possess their goodly heritage, the numerous and mighty nations that dwelt in Canaan were fist to be expelled. What if for once the eternal Sovereign, and just Governor of the world, shall transfer to a chosen seed, the property of a land inhabited by guilty wretches, and put into their hand a two-edged sword, to execute vengeance upon the Heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written;‖ shall we

* Rom. xi. 20. † Isa. lxiii. 16 ‡ Gal. iii. 29. ‖ Psal cxlix. 6—9.

therefore presume to censure the Majesty of Heaven as cruel and unjust? No: the horrid wickedness of these nations fully justified the severity of their doom; and the peremptory command of God absolves the Israelites from the charge of barbarity, in becoming the executioners of the sentence. If some in latter ages have, with equal cruelty and injustice, for Heaven's cause, (a horrid pretence!) made desolate the earth, let them not plead this precedent; for as such a mandate was never given before, so shall it never be repeated again. But leaving it to God himself to vindicate his ways to man, as he is well able to do, we shall proceed to notice that spiritual privilege of the true Israel, signified by this victory over the nations.

Perhaps it were not improper to view it as an emblem of the conquest over the world obtained by the first preachers and professors of Christianity under the banner of the cross, though not with carnal weapons. Tho' it is very fit that the Antichristian kingdom shall be promoted by the horrid methods of torture, massacre, fire, & faggot, the Son of man came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them. If the apostles of the Lamb had a two-edged sword in their hand, it was the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: faith was their shield, righteousness their breastplate, and their helmet was the hope of salvation. Equipt with this armour of light, they subdued the nations to the obedience of faith: nor could the persecutor's sword, the philosopher's wisdom

nor the inveterate customs of the populace, received by tradition from their fathers, retard the progress of their victorious arms, though, to the outward eye, they seemed but as grashoppers before these formidable sons of Anak.

We might also here take occasion to think of that dominion which the upright shall have in the morning of the resurrection, when the saints of the Most High shall sit with Christ upon his throne, and in such manner as is competent unto them, shall judge the world of wicked men and angels. Even in this imperfect state, the lustre of divine graces, and beauties of holiness, have commanded respect and veneration in the minds of proud & wicked men. A judge has trembled before a prisoner, and a fox has feared a lamb. These are preludes of that final superiority of the righteous in the decisive hour of judgment, when the evil shall bow before the good, and be ashamed for their envy at the people they despised.

But chiefly the Canaanites we must endeavour to extirpate, are the lusts that war in our members, that war against the soul. Against these inward foes must we lift the hand of violence, if we mean to take the kingdom of Heaven. Israelites indeed, here point your revenge, here bend your indignation! To pity these, is the highest cruelty to yourselves; and to make any league with them is to be overcome. To mingle with these nations was fatal to Israel of old; they were forbid to seek their peace or their wealth forever: but if they should cleave to the rem-

nant of these nations, on whatever pretence, know for certain, that the Lord your God will no more drive them out, but they shall be snares and traps unto you, scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, and shall vex you in the good land wherein ye dwell.* Such grieving thorns are unmortified corruptions in our hearts: and if we consult our peace and safety, it will be our constant work to weaken their power by all possible means. But to attempt a reconciliation of holiness and sin, to mediate peace between these contrary principles, is to entail upon ourselves a source of perpetual disquietude.

The Canaanitish nations were not only the first inhabitants of the country, but greater in number, and mightier in power, than Israel their conqueror. So in the holy war, the sin that dwells in the soul, is the first possessor, and mightier than the principal of grace received. Thanks to its omnipotent Ally, that iniquity prevails not against it, even to a total victory. Let none be deterred from fighting the good fight of faith against these inward enemies, though perhaps some branches of the body of sin may seem so vivacious as even to gather new life by their foils; may seem to have intrenched themselves so deeply in the constitution of the soul, and to derive so many advantages from outward circumstances in life, that to expel them is equally impossible, as for the Israelites to drive out those Canaanties who had chariots of iron. Under the divine

* Josh xxiii. 13.

conduct of Jesus Christ, our true Joshua, we shall set our feet upon the necks of those dreadful foes. Take unto you the whole armour of God, and remove every accursed thing from the midst of thee, O Israel, and the Lord thy God will drive out these nations before thee by little and little. Their defence is already departed from them, since the law, the strength of sin, is perfectly fulfilled, and stript of its condemning power. A time, a happy time will come, when no Jebusite shall dwell in the land, when no latent corruption shall infest thy soul, and there shall be no pricking briar, nor any grieving thorn to the house of Israel: for it is the gracious promise of the Captain of our salvation, He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.*

XVII. The Allegory of HAGAR and SARAH.

AS we are informed by the great apostle of the Gentiles, that the private history of Abraham's family was a presage of the events that happened to his posterity, we shall glance it a little. This faithful patriarch had received the promise of a seed, in whom all nations should be blessed. But the accomplishment was long delayed; his wife proved barren; old age was stealing on apace; and there seemed no human probability that Sarah should

* Rev. ii. 26. 27.

have a son. She ought, however, to have believed him faithful who had promised, and fully able to perform what he had said. She should not have devised unlawful means of helping the promise to bring forth, but patiently expected God's time of visitation, which is always the best. But it was otherwise: for in the ardour of impatience, she urges Abraham her husband to marry her bond-maid; fondly imagining, that this stratagem might compensate her own barrenness, and forward the birth of the promised seed. Whatever humility and self-denial this good woman may be supposed to have acted, in making such a proposal, it cannot certainly be vindicated from the charge of being in itself immoral, and contrary to the original dictates of the law of nature: for though polygamy was ordinarily practised in the primitive ages of the world, and even in the patriarchal families, who professed the true religion, it is neither to be excused nor imitated. There is no ground to think that God approved, though he tolerated, the custom of having more wives than one. From the beginning it was not so. And indeed the family-broils, which the scripture frequently mentions, as occasioned by this practice, is a sufficient confirmation of its manifest inconvenience. Of this we have a lively instance in the present case: for no sooner is this unlawful overture of Sarah complied with by her husband, by taking Hagar into his bed, than the insolent and disrespectful carriage of the bond-maid, when she saw

that she had conceived, raised such variance in the family, that at last she is obliged to run away from the resentment of her injured mistress. But returning, and humbling herself, a peace was again patched up for a time. She bears Ishmael, Abraham's first-born son; but this was not the child of the promise. There was nothing extraordinary about his birth, which was, to use the phrase of the postle, after the flesh.* The happy seed, that should become a blessing to the world, must be born in lawful wedlock; not of a bond-maid, but of a free woman. And, Sarah, why did you doubt if the power of God was able to make the barren woman a joyful mother? How absurd is it for any to hasten providence! Give it time, and it will do all things well. For when, in process of time, Abraham's body is as dead as Sarah's womb, lo, Isaac is conceived and born; Isaac the promised seed, Isaac the long expected child, is brought forth, to the great joy of his parents, a son of their old age. By this time Ishmael is become a youth, and arrived at years of some discretion; but he walks rather in the steps of his mother than of his father; and is so daring, as to mock at his younger brother, at his weaning feast. Though one would be willing to excuse this behaviour, as proceeding only from puerile levity, the severity of the punishment inflicted for this fault, seems to evince, that there was a great mixture of impiety in this insulting carriage, and

*Gal. iv. 23.

that the promise itself was the chief thing he derided. It could not fail to be very irritating to Sarah, to observe how ill her kindness to Hagar was requited by the undutiful deportment of her son; and when she urged their present dismission from the family, Abraham was not over ready to comply with this request, because of the affection he bore to Ishmael; and he hoped that the passion of his wife, though just would soon subside. But the motion of Sarah, Cast out the bond-woman, and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac,* is backed with a mandate from God himself. And accordingly the father of the Jewish nation, which is very remarkable, discards from his family his eldest son, who was equally circumcised with Isaac, never, as would seem, to return again. And this was done by the positive command of God himself, with a special view to prefigure the future rejection of a great part of Abraham's natural posterity, that were only descended from him according to the flesh.

That this was the secret design of providence in this memorable story, might been conjectured from the narrative of Moses. But we are not allowed so much as to doubt of it, by that infallible expositor of the law, Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ; who, discoursing on this very subject to the revolted Galatian churches, expressly says, Which things are an allegory, for these (women) are the two covenants.†

* Gen. xxi. 10. † Gal. iv. 24.

According to this apostle, Hagar, with her son, was secretly designed to represent the covenant that prescribes our own obedience as the meritorious condition of justification and life; a representation of which covenant was exhibited at mount Sinai in Arabia, and it also answers to Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children, that is, to the present apostate church of the Jews, who expect to be justified by the works of the law, and all who imitate their example. Upon the other hand, Sarah the free-woman, with Isaac her son, is an emblem of the covenant that directs to look for salvation only by the righteousness of a middle person, without the works of the law; which covenant was published from mount Zion, and answers to Jerusalem above, or the true church, whether of Jews or Gentiles, that is free from the legal yoke, and is the mother of us all, if we believe. Let us pursue this beautiful allegory a little in the track which the apostle has marked out.

And, first, it may be said, that as Sarah the free-woman was before Hagar; so the promise was before the law, and the covenant of grace antecedent unto the covenant of works. Not to speak of the federal transaction betwixt the Father and the Son, which the scripture frequently mentions as commencing from all everlasting, the promise, or revelation of this eternal covenant, was exhibited to the church long before the Sinai dispensation.

Again, as Sarah was the mistress, and Hagar the

maid; so the gospel is the mistress to which the law was subservient. If Hagar had kept her station without departing from that subordination she owed to Sarah, she might then been of singular use in the patriarch's family, instead of raising these broils and animosities which were afterwards occasioned by her. For a servant bearing rule, is one of Solomon's unseemly things: and among other things which the earth cannot bear, and for which it is disquieted, he mentions an odious woman when she is married, and a handmaid that is heir to her mistress. So if the legal covenant be kept in its own room and place, she may greatly serve the covenant of grace; she may be remarkably useful to convince of sin, and to endear a Saviour: for "the law," as the apostle affirms, is good if a man use it lawfully.* But if this bond-maid, the law, assume the sole dominion, and rival her mistress, to whom she should humble herself, that is, if she takes upon her to justify and save, she then works wrath, and is fatally pernicious. And this the event proved.

Hagar is taken (unseemly as it was) into the bed of Sarah. This seems to have prefigured, that the law should be taken into the room of the gospel: for as Abraham, after he was married to the free-woman, turned aside to the bond-maid; so his posterity after they received the promise, from whence alone they should have looked for justification, and everlasting life, turned aside to the law, which was

* 1 Tim. i. 8.

added for other ends, and expected from the law that which the promise only can confer. Whoever they be, whether of the Jewish or Christian denomination, that depend upon their own righteousness, either as the sole or partial cause of their salvation, they are guilty of the same fault in the mystery, that Abraham was in the letter, when he permitted Hagar to ascend the bed of her mistress.

Though Sarah was long barren, Hagar is not. The birth of Ishmael is not near so difficult as the birth of Isaac. It is a far easier matter for the law to gender children unto bondage, than for the promise to bring forth children unto liberty. Jerusalem above, or the true gospel-church, labours indeed to bring forth spiritual children: but, ah! how few are the children of this free-woman, to the vast shoals of legal professors who desire to be under the law! The most eminent preachers of the gospel have had ground of complaining, Lord, who hath believed our report?* and that they laboured in vain, and spent their strength in vain, and for nought.—But as the womb of Sarah was at last opened, after it had been long shut; so of the gospel-church her antitype the prophet cries, Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travel with child; for more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.†

The insolent behaviour of Ishmael, the son of the

* Is. liii. 1. † Is. liv. 1.

bond-maid, when he mocked the child of promise, who was nobler than himself, is an emblem of the persecuting spirit, of self-justiciaries against the true believers in all ages: for as he who was born after the flesh, persecuted him who was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Witness the enmity of the Jews against the spreading of the gospel! Witness the Papists bloody rage! Witness ye flames, that reduced to ashes the bodies of so many noble martyrs! Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must be content, in one shape or another, to suffer persecution.

Lastly, the sentence of exclusion from Abraham's family, pronounced by the scripture against the bond woman and her son, was a sure presage of the irrevocable doom of all the children of the law, tho' like the circumcised, but mocking Ishmael, they are born in the church, and wear the professor's badge. Abraham, says the scripture, rose early in the morning, took bread and a bottle of water,& gave it unto Hagar and the child, & sent her away; and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.* Even so the carnal Jews, though Abraham's natural seed, are now cast out from the church, and wander thro' the world. And all who remain under the law, and are not, as Isaac was, the children of the promise, shall be in like manner cast out from the presence of God, and excluded from the heavenly inheritance.

† Gen. xxi. 14.

PART THIRD.

TYPICAL PLACES.

1. THE LAW OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE*.

TO inspire the minds of the Israelites with the greater horror at the dreadful sin of murder, it pleased God, their Judge and Law-giver, not only to appoint that the murderer should be put to death, but to permit the avenger of blood, or the near kinsman, to kill, with impunity from men, the unfortunate manslayer, who without malice or design, was the instrument of taking away the life of his neighbour. But to counterbalance this permission, and to protect an unhappy man from the effects of rash resentment, it pleased the same good God to appoint cities of refuge in his commonwealth, to which the manslayer might fly as his sanctuary from the avenger. These cities were six in number; three in the land of Canaan, and three on the other side of Jordan. They belonged to the tribe of Levi. The roads to them were prepared by authority. And that nothing might retard the flight of the hapless manslayer, to whom every moment was precious, they say, that the breadth of the road was thirty-two cubits; that where there happened to be water, it was laid over with a bridge; and that, at the cross ways, the inscription of REFUGE, REFUGE, directed where to bend his course. In

* See Numb. xxxv. Josh. xx.

the city of refuge he was supplied with all necessary accommodations, and his life once more was protected by the laws of the realm. He was not, however, to venture without the precincts of the hospitable town; for if the avenger of blood should find and kill him, he would not been punished as a murderer for doing it. The death of the high priest was the first thing that released him from his confinement, and left him at liberty to go where-ever he pleased. Even so, by the death of the great High Priest, the guilty sinner is rescued from bondage and confinement, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

But what we intend chiefly to notice here, is the resemblance betwixt the flight of the manslayer to the cities of refuge, and of the sinner to Jesus Christ, as the hope set before him. And perhaps it will appear very probable, that the method of our salvation was typified by this Mosaic law; at least, that here is no contemptible allegory.

Let the manslayer be an emblem of the guilty sinner, who, by violating the precept of the holy law, butchers his own soul, murders his neighbour, and, in some manner, assassinates God himself, whose very being is struck at by the commission of every sin.

Let the avenger of blood denote the inexorable justice of an angry God, whose wrath it is alike impossible to shun or to endure;—the dreadful curse of the condemning law, whose quiver is filled with

the arrows of every divine theatning; the invenomed sting of a resentful conscience, which, infixed in the soul, can make it a terror to itself, and all around: —or death, the grizly king of terrors, the universal destroyer of the nations, through fear of whom, many are held in bondage all their life time. Yea, what creature is not ready, at the slightest intimation of the divine will, to start up an avenger of its Creator's quarrel against the obnoxious criminal?

Let the cities of refuge represent the glorious Immanuel, and his blessed mediation. These cities pertained to the promised land, and were to be found no where else. So the salvation of Jesus Christ is exhibited in the church: "Upon mount "Zion there shall be deliverance*; and God is known in her palace for a refuget." They belonged to the priestly tribe. And the priestly office of the Redeemer is that branch of his character which affords the most immediate relief to the sin-burdened soul. They were six in number, and scattered through the territories of Israel at convenient distances, that where ever the misfortune should happen, the manslayer might not have far to go to one or other of them. May not this put us in mind, that our Redeemer is a present help in trouble? to find whom we need neither climb up to heaven, nor dive into the bottom of the sea; for the word is nigh unto us. And in this word, the great JEHOVAH brings near his righteousness, and his salvation.

* Obadiah ver. 17. † Psal. xlviii. 2.

The patency and plainness of the roads that led to these cities of protection, may occasion our reflecting on much the same thing. Guilty, condemned, trembling sinner, see how thy city of refuge expands her gates! how the stumbling-blocks are removed! how the way is prepared! how the law is satisfied, justice attoned, and God reconciled! how the wayfaring man, though a fool, needs not err in the way of holiness! Nothing, nothing ought to retard thy present flight unto the hope set before thee, to hinder thy present trusting in Christ for everlasting salvation from sin, and its dreadful consequences.

But who is he that thus flies for refuge to Jesus Christ from the inexorable justice of an angry God, and from the dreadful curse of a condemning law? If the manslayer had not been conscious of the deed, and apprehensive of the kindsman's resentment on that account, he would not have judged it necessary to save himself by flight. And if he could have thought of a better expedient to ensure his safety, he would not have fled to a city where he must long remain a prisoner, and in exile. But necessity, hard necessity, drove him to it as his only sanctuary. Even so the refugee, who flies to Jesus Christ from the avenging wrath of God, is a person in whose heart is wrought a conviction of his guilt, an apprehension of his danger, and a despair of every other refuge. Formerly he had a very favourable opinion of himself, and his convictions of moral guilt were so general and moderate, as to sit easy upon his mind,

without wounding his rest. He thought it no difficult matter to elude the divine threatnings, and imagined himself secure, because he was thoughtless of danger. The secrecy of sin, the example of the multitude, the hope of long life, the distance of the day of judgment, the presumption of God's mercy, his privileges and reputation as a member of the church; these, and such like things, he fled unto, as a sanctuary from his melancholy thoughts. Or, perhaps he stilled the enemy and avenger of an accusing conscience, with business, with recreations, with sensual indulgencies. But now a dreadful sound of vengeance is in his ears. He sees the heinous guilt of his iniquities—hears, with Adam, the voice of God—knows not where to hide his guilty head—looks on his right hand, and beholds, but there is no shelter; all refuge fails him, and no man cares for his soul. The method of salvation by Christ unfolds unto his view. "This is the way, walk ye "in it*," says the voice from heaven; and "Turn "to this strong hold thou prisoner of hope†." And as the man who flies for his life from a pursuing enemy, will cast away from him any thing, however valuable, that would cumber and detain him; so he parts at once both with his sins, and with his own righteousnesses; and what things were gain to him he counts them loss, that he may win Christ, and be found in him. He cries unto him, and says, "O Lord, thou art my refuge: attend unto my

* Is. xxx. 21. † Zech. ix. 12.

"cry, for I am brought very low: deliver me "from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I*!"

It was not only required of the manslayer, that he should fly to the city of refuge for once; but he was to remain there till the death of the high priest. Nor is it sufficient to believe in Christ for once, without abiding in him as our sure defence. Our High Priest never dies, therefore should we abide in our refuge for ever: "for in returning and rest shall we "be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be "our strength†."

The protection afforded to all, both Jews and Gentiles, (for there was no difference,) who fled to these cities of refuge, is no despicable representation of the ability of Jesus Christ to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Soon as the wretched manslayer reached the wished town, where he was legally secure of life, and where (they say) no weapons were allowed to be made or sold, he could talk with the avenger, without turning pale; though before his throbbing heart beat high with the impulse of fear, while he tho't that every man he met would slay him. Even so the miserable sinner, who has obtained a discovery of his guilt, and been harassed perhaps for some considerable time with a fearful looking for of judgment, his soul draws nigh unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers: the moment he finds his rest in Christ, by believing in

* Psal. cxlii. 5, 6. † Is. xxx. 15.

him for life and salvation, he can sit and answer all his accusers, and talk with every enemy and avenger. "O enemy, destructions are come to a per-"petual end †. Who shall lay any thing to the "charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: "it is Christ that died ‡." Produce your charge, O law! and death, where is thy sting?

We shall, lastly, observe the superior excellency of our New-Testament refuge to these ancient cities of protection. In all things he has the pre-eminence. None were to be finally privileged in these cities but the manslayer: who was not indeed guilty of any crime, but rather ill-fated and unhappy. If the wilful murderer had fled to any of them, or even to God's altar, he was to be dragged from thence to suffer condign punishment. But none were ever dragged from Jesus Christ, who fled unto him by faith, to return again into condemnation, however atrocious their crimes, however flagrant their guilt. Here murderers, adulterers, blasphemers, persecutors, and the most execrable miscreants that ever the sun beheld, have been for ever delivered from their Judge. These ancient towns defended only the natural life from the avenger's sword, which was to be, however, soon paid as a debt to nature. But if Jesus Christ is our refuge, he will rescue us from everlasting vengeance; he will give unto us eternal life, and we shall never perish. The refugees in the old cities of refuge were indeed secured

† Psal. ix. 6. ‡ Rom. viii. 33. 34.

in their lives by the laws of the land. But the promise of God that cannot lie, and the oath of God which cannot be recalled, are two immutable things, by which their eternal happiness is secured, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them. Happy believer, thy consolation is strong indeed; stronger than the afflictions of life, stronger than the fear of death, and stronger than the terror of judgment. Why shouldst thou not dismiss thy fears, when thy never ending safety from the most dreadful dangers is so amply secured, that God himself, for whom it is impossible to lie, would (O blasphemous thought!) be perjured, shouldst thou ever come into condemnation? "The "eternal God is thy refuge *, a very pleasant help "in trouble, though the earth be removed, and tho' "the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, "though the waters thereof roar and be troubled†."

II. THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS ‡.

THE tabernacle which Moses made in the wilderness, by the special appointment of the God of Israel, was the first religious structure in which the eternal Majesty vouchsafed to dwell on the earth. It was a sort of a portable temple, and not unfitly esteemed the center of the ceremonial worship. The materials of it were collected by the

* Dut. xxxiii. 27. † Psal. xlvi. 1. 2. 3 ‡ Exod. xxv. xxvi xxvii.

voluntary contributions of the children of Israel who, upon this occasion, offered so liberally, that Moses found it necessary to stop them by a new proclamation. The pattern of it was minutely described to Moses in the mount by God himself, who ordered him to be very exact in executing the heavenly plan. Two famous artist, whose names were Bezaleel and Aholiab, were inspired by the Spirit of God with most exquisit and masterly skill, to finish the holy fabric, and its utensils, according to the divine plan. If you are curious to know the construction of this sacred tent, you may take this short description of it.

First of all, there was a spacious court, a hundred cubits long, and fifty broad. It was hung round with curtains of fine twined linen, that were fastened with silver hooks to pillars with sockets of brass filleted with silver. The gate by which you entered to this wide area, was a hanging of twenty cubits, of blue purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle-work, and suspended by four pillars. This outward court the whole nation might enter on their solemn festivals, as it is said, "Enter into his "gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with "praise*." Here, under the open sky, stood the altar of burnt offering, and the brazed laver.

Within the circumference of this wide and open court was the tabernacle itself, into which none but the tribe of Levi were allowed to enter, to accom-

* Psal. c. 4.

plish the service of God. It was a close tent, twenty cubits long, ten cubits broad, and its height equal to its breadth. It was constructed of boards of Shittim-wood of regular dimensions, running into one another. These boards were supported beneath with sockets of silver, and corroborated behind with bars of the same wood over laid with gold, and fastened by golden rings through which they passed. Do you ask, what was the roof of this magnificient tent? First, it was covered with ten curtains of equal measure, of twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet embroidered with cherubims, and coupled with loops of blue, and taches of gold. Then it was covered with eleven curtains of goats hair, hung together by taches of brass. Next it was covered with rams skins died red. And above all, there was a covering of badgers skins, to protect the tabernacle, and its coverings, from the injuries of the weather.

But though these boards and curtains, thus joined together, made but one tabernacle, this one tabernacle was divided into two apartments. The first was called THE HOLY PLACE, into which you entered through a vail or hanging of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, curiously embroidered, supported with five pillars of Shittim-wood, overlaid with gold, and their bases of brass, and fastened with golden hooks. Here stood the golden table, the golden candlestick, and the golden altar. The second was called THE MOST HO-

LY PLACE, into which the high priest, and none but he, did enter once in the year, through a second vail, of the same materials with the first, broidered with cherubims, and fastened by golden taches to four pillars of Shittim-wood, overlaid with gold, and their bases of silver. In this secret chamber of the Deity were reposited the most sacred symbols of the divine presence. Here was the ark of the covenant, covered by the mercy-seat, and over it the cherubims of glory, between which JEHOVAH himself was said to dwell. Here was the golden pot that had manna, and the miraculous rod of Aaron that budded. And here the appearance of the glory of the Lord is supposed to have resided, and been seen on special occasions.

Such was the structure of this holy tent, which was built in the taste of Heaven, reared up by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and consecrated by Moses. And we must forget not, this one thing, that it was a moveable pavillion, and therefore so contrived as to be easily taken down, and set up again. While the peculiar people sojourned in the wilderness, the tabernacle shared the same fate, being transported from place to place by the ministry of the levites. When they possessed the promised land, at first it rested at Gilgal, afterwards in Shiloh; in the days of Saul, it seems to have been in Nob; and when Solomon began to reign over Israel, it was pitched in Gibeon. But at the last it was altogether superseded by the magnificient temple

built by that glorious monarch; and probably the costly materials of it were lodged among the sacred treasures of the house of the Lord.

What shall we then say of these things? Did the high and lofty One, whose dwelling is not with flesh, who resides not in temples made with hands, did he stand in the least need of this moveable habitation? Glorious as it was, can we reasonably think it to have been a meet apartment for the deity, or at all adequate to the inconceivably glorious, immense and eternal Spirit? What a contemptible idea of the true God would such a supposition inspire into the mind? Away with such a groveling thought, so unworthy of God, and shocking to reason herself! But if we suppose, that these holy places made with hands were figures of heaven, of Christ, and of the church, and exhibited as such to the believing Israelites, then doubtless we will be reconciled to that very particular regard the high God was pleased to shew to the worldly sanctuary. Then we shall be able to account for that ardent affection the ancient believers confessed on all occasions to the tabernacles of the Lord of hosts. Then it will not appear absurd, that the same God who spent but six days in creating the universal frame of nature should spend no less than forty in prescribing the little frame of the tabernacle. And that these holy places made with hands, were figures of heaven, of Christ, and of the church, we are now to declare.

First then, the tabernacle of Moses was a figure of heaven itself, that glorious high throne from the beginning. For this interpretation we have the express word of an inspired penman of the New-Testament, who, speaking of our great High Priest, plainly declares, that "he is not entered into the "holy places made with hands, which are the figures "of the true; but into heaven itself, now to ap-"pear in the presence of God for us*." Perhaps we should not err though we should think, that, as the Jewish high priest went through the outward court, and passed through the holy place into the holiest of all; so Jesus Christ, when he ascended on high, passed through the first heaven of clouds, and the second heaven of stars, into the third heaven of angels. But though the most holy places was by itself alone the most eminent figure of the heavenly sanctuary, this hinders not to regard the whole fabric as an emblem of the same blissful mansion. Was the tabernacle of Moses divided into several parts? We know him that said, "In my Father's "house are many mansions†." Was it a place of great splendour and magnificience even to the eye? "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of the "living God‡." Was it the dwelling of JEHOVAH, where the visible tokens of his presence were seen? In the heavenly mansions he unvails the brightness of his glory to all the saints around him. Did priests always officiate there? The saints

* Heb. ix. 24. † John xiv. 2. ‡ Psl. lxxxvii. 3.

in light are both kings and priests unto God. Were the curtains broidered with cherubims? In the celestial abodes are the innumerable company of angels. Was it replenished with all necessary furniture and provision? In heaven is the true light, and the living bread, fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. Did the voice of praise continually resound in the earthly tabernacle? The eternal regions are for ever filled with loud hosannas. Was holiness and legal purity required in all who trod the venerable courts of God's ancient dwelling-place? Nothing that is defiled can enter the heavenly Jerusalem. And lastly, as the tabernacle was sprinkled with blood by the Jewish high priest, when he penetrated its innermost recesses once in the year with the names of all the tribes engraven on his heart; even so the blood of Jesus Christ has consecrated that high and holy place, that sinners of the human kind might not be for ever excluded from dwelling in the beatific presence of JEHOVAH. When the everlasting gates of heaven were by sin barred for ever against us, the blood of Christ was the key that opened them again: and the believers in his atoning blood may enter into heaven itself with greater boldness, than the high priest when he went into the holiest of all, than the Levites when they officiated in the holy place, or than the people when they approached the outward court.

A second thing which the tabernacle of Moses did most undoubtedly represent, was the person and

future incarnation of the Messias himself who was made flesh in the appointed time, and tabernacled among us, and who spake of his own body when he said of the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and I will "raise it up in three days*." Was the tabernacle a work of heavenly architecture? The human nature of our Lord was prepared by his heavenly Father, and curiously wrought, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, in the lower parts of the earth. Was it the habitation of the Deity? "In him dwells all the "fulness of the Godhead bodily†." Was it anointed with holy oil? The most holy humanity of our Lord was anointed with the Spirit which God gave not by measure unto him. Was it embellished with a variety of ornaments? He was adorned with every divine grace. Was it taken down by the Levites, and removed from place to place, till at last it was conveyed to Jerusalem, where it remained in the temple? The human nature of our Lord was dissolved by death; reared up again by his resurrection; and lastly, translated into the heavenly temple, which must contain him to the time of the restitution of all things. Was the tabernacle the place where God met with Israel? Here he communed with them; here they presented their gifts, and slew their sacrifices and even prayed with their faces towards it, though at the remotest distance. It is easy to see here a lively figure of the one Me-

* John ii. 19. † Col. ii. 9

diator between God and man. In Christ alone we have a clear revelation of the divine will; and by him must we present our spiritual sacrifices, and do in his name whatsoever we do, whether in word or deed. We shall only add, that as there were two apartments, the holy and the most holy place, which made, however, but one tabernacle: so in Christ there is a human nature, signified by the holy place, and a divine nature, represented by the holiest of all; yet these two natures are mysteriously united in one person.

The third and last thing prefigured by the tabernacle, is the church, that holy society and mystical body of Jesus Christ, which in scripture-stile, is the house and temple of the living God, in which he dwells. We shall enumerate some of the most glaring parallels between them. The tabernacle was planned by the wisdom of God himself, who condescended to adjust the minutest particulars, as the loops, the taches, and the pins, and peremptorily required, that all things should he done according to the original pattern. And who knows not, that all things in the gospel-church are planned by the same unerring wisdom, and how much the sovereign Architect has testified his displeasure in every age against the invention of things pertaining to God? "All that I commanded you, that shall ye "do; ye shall not add, ye shall not diminish*." This is the law, this is the prophets, and this is the

* Deut. xii. 32.

doctrine of Christ and his apostles. The tabernacle was executed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, who rested on Bezaleel and Aholiab, to fit them for this service, without whom they were no more capable of it than other men. It was the same Spirit that descended on the blessed apostles, the wise master-builders of the gospel-church, without which they could not have been qualified for the honourable work. Yea, it is the Holy Ghost, who by his common gifts, makes ordinary ministers workman that need not be ashamed. The tabernacle was composed of very different materials, as gold, silver, wood, brass, scarlet, blue, and purple cloth, fine linen, rams skins, badgers skins, and goats hair: yet all the different materials, combined by the workman's skill, conduced each in their kind to the beauty and perfection of the structure: and the gold could not say to the brass, nor the scarlet to the goats hair, "I have no need of you *." So in the spiritual house the materials of which it is composed, that is the believers in Christ Jesus, are men of divers nations, different stations in life, unlike natural tempers, unequal gifts and graces, and various ministries: yet being fitly framed together by the operation of the Holy Ghost, they grow into a holy temple in the Lord. The symmetry of the ancient tabernacle, the nice conjunction of the boards by mortisies and bars, and of the curtains

* 1 Cor. xii. 21.

by loops and taches, was not so delightful to the eye of the body, as it is pleasant to the eye of the mind, to see brethren dwelling together in unity, perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, and carefully endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The tabernacle was covered with many coverings, with fine twined linen, with blue, purple, and scarlet, with rams skins dyed red, with goats hair, with badgers kins. By this means it was rendered extremely close, and finely protected from the injuries of the weather. May not this recal to our mind the ample protection and security of the gospel-church from the heat of God's anger, and from all worldly tribulations under the rich, the strong, and the broad purple covering of Immanuel's righteousness? For "the Lord is their keeper; the "Lord is their shade on their right hand: the sun "shall not smite them by day, nor the moon by "night: the Lord will preserve them from all evil; "the Lord will preserve their soul*." The tabernacle was ornamented with gold and silver, and curious embroideries; and though without it was not inelegant, it was, however, most magnificient within. Even so, the beauty of the gospel-sanctuary does not so much strike the eye of sense, that looks at the outward appearence, as it is obvious to the spiritual sight, that looks at unseen things. Would

* Psal. cxxi. 5. 6. 7.

you discern the true glory of the spouse of Jesus Christ, look not at her face, because the sun hath looked upon her; but the king's daughter is all glorious within. The tabernacle was anointed with oil when Moses consecrated it, and the church has an unction from the holy one. The tabernacle was divided into several partitions. The outward court might denote the visible church; the holy place is an emblem of the church invisible; and the holiest of all represents the church triumphant in glory, to which none are admitted but the royal priesthood. By baptism we enter into the first, by regeneration into the second, and by death into the third. O death, it is thine to pull aside the vail of mortality that interposes between the holy and the most holy place? Happy they who enter by faith, and not by a visible profession only, into his sanctuary, which he has sanctified for evermore. For as there was no possibility of coming at the holiest of all, but by passing through the holy place; even so it is impossible, if we are not partakers of his holiness, to be hereafter sharers of his glory.

III. THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.

THE second and last material habitation of JEHOVAH was the temple, which Solomon, that magnificient monarch, reared upon the hill Moriah in Jerusalem, the metropolis of his kingdom, to the honour of the God of Israel. The plan of it

was dictated by the Spirit unto his father David, who was prohibited from executing it himself, because of the bloody wars he had waged in the course of his life. The workmen were partly Israelites, and partly Gentiles of Tyre. The materials were the best trees, the most precious metals, and large hewn stone, prepared and fitted for one another before they were laid upon the foundation, that the noise of axes and hammers might not be heard as the building rose.* The structure itself was sixty cubits long, twenty broad, and thirty cubits high, and, like the tabernacle, consisted of two apartments the holy, and the most holy place, or oracle. You entered this temple on the east by a stately porch, which was higher than the edifice itself by ninety cubits, and may be considered as the steeple of that sacred palace. The length of this porch was equal to the breadth of the principal house, and the breadth was the half of that length. Here stood the two famous brazen pillars, whose names were Jachin and Boaz, that is stability and strength; tho' they were placed there, not for the support, but for the ornament of the house. Two open courts surrounded the whole fabric, and side-chambers were built round about against the wall. A row of narrow windows that sloped within, illuminated the dome. The strength and beauty of God's sanctuary were the main things that distinguished this fin-

*1 Kings vi. 7.

ished piece of architecture : for the dimensions were far from being wide, but it was supported by a strong foundation of large and costly stones, and ornamented within in the most splendid manner, with planks of cedar, plates of gold, glittering diamonds, and figures of palm-trees and cherubims. This was that holy and beautiful house which the Chaldeans were permitted to demolish for the first time, and the Romans for the second time, a thousand years after the first foundation was laid. Seventeen hundred years have now elapsed since the final desolation of this solemn temple, which never more shall rise beneath the builder's hand : for it is the will of God, that in every place, and not in Jerusalem alone, he should be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

As the temple of Solomon was built for the same end with the tabernacle of Moses, without all doubt the typical meaning of the one and the other was also the same. Was the tabernacle a figure of heaven, of Christ, and of the church ? So also was the temple. It was a figure of heaven, the glorious habitation of God and angels, where the righteous—flourish like the palm-trees that were carved on the walls ;—serve him continually, like the priests that entered into the sanctuary ;—and go no more out, being established for ever, like the pillars that graced the porch of that holy place. And as the stones which Solomon used were all hewn and prepared before they were brought there ; so all the stones of

the celestial house, or the members of the triumphant church, are afore prepared unto glory. Now is the time when their natural roughness and asperity is taken away by the skilful operation of the divine Spirit, and the various afflictions of this life, which exercise them in this vail of tears, that they may rest for ever, and ever in the calm regions of everlasting peace, where no jarring sound is heard, any more than there was of axes and hammers in the building of the temple. It was also a figure of the humanity of the Messiah, who spake of the temple of his body, when he said, "Destroy this temple, and in thee days I will raise it up."* But, without resuming what has been already hinted on this head, let us only further observe, that the temple was, equally as the tabernacle, a figure of that holy society the church, which is his body, whether we consider the plan, the materials, the workmen, or the building itself.

The plan of the temple was designed by God no less than that of the tabernacle. Nor could any wisdom inferior to divine, have adjusted the model of the spiritual house, which the angels admire. The materials were prepared, and the stones fitted to one another, before they were compacted together, so that noisy tools were wholly unnecessary as the building arose. An expressive emblem this of that peaceful harmony which ought to reign among the

* John ii. 1. 9.

builders of the church as they carry on this holy work, and which would be easily attained, if none but polished lively stones, or persons duly qualified were admitted to become a part of this fabric. The workmen were Gentiles of Tyre, as well as Israelites. Was not this a prelude of the future vocation of the Gentiles, that even the sons of the strangers, and those that were afar off, should bear apart in building the walls of the gospel-church?

Chiefly let us consider the building itself. It was supported by a strong foundation. What should this be in the antitype but Jesus Christ, the foundation which God hath laid in Zion, on which all the apostles and prophets have built themselves and others from the beginning of the world, & to which alone the church is indebted for that unshaken stability which laughs at all opposition? It was illuminated with many windows. For the church is a lightsome house, in which the true light shines. It was surrounded with side chambers. Emblems of the different, visible churches, which belong to the same universal body. It was adorned with gold and cedar and its very floor was crusted with the most precious metal. This may remind us of the invisible glory of the church, where the meanest office is honourable, and the meanest member excellent. It was graved with cherubims and palm-trees. This may denote the ministry of angels in the church, and the eternal verdure of all that are planted in the house of the Lord. It was fronted

with pillars. Though ill, alas! did they answer their name. Where was their stability, where was their strength, when the Chaldeans carried them away? But though the pillars of heaven tremble, the pillars of the church shall stand, and thus the gracious promise runs to every the meanest believer; "Him that overcometh, I will make him a "pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no "more out."* It was inhabited by the Deity, and a house of prayer for all people. So in the church are the visible tokens of the divine presence, and holiness becomes it for ever. It was replenished with costly furniture. And in Christ Jesus, the gospel-church really possesses all the holy utensils of the ancient temple. But this must be more largely declared.

FIRST, THE ORDINANCE OF THE ARK AND MERCY-SEAT.

WHERE should we begin in enemerating the holy utensils and furniture of the tabernacle and temple, but with the sacred chest, commonly called the ark,† sometimes the ark of his strength ‡ the ark of the covenant, ‖ the ark of the testimony, § and the ark whose name is called by the name of the God of Israel?¶ Well may we esteem it the heart of the worldly sanctuary. It was the first holy implement the inspired artist Bezaleel

* Rev. iii. 22. † Josh iv. 11. ‡ Psal. cxxxii. 8.
‖ Numb. x. 33. § Exod. xxvi. 34. ¶ Sam. vi. 2.

formed, and resided in the most venerable apartment of the holy places made with hands. Its dimensions were small, but its materials were rich and magnificient. It was made of the best cedar or Shittim-wood, and overlaid with pure gold both within and without. It was edged round with a border or coronet, and covered above with a lid of the same precious metal, called the mercy-seat. For the convenience of carriage from place to place, in the ambulatory state of their common-wealth, there were fastened to its four corners so many golden rings, into which they put staves of Shittim-wood, overlaid with gold, that were never taken out, but suffered to remain even after the ark rested in the temple, and ceased to be a burden to the Levites. Within this splendid chest were deposited the two tables of stone that were hewed by Moses, and inscribed with the finger of God, after the first were broken. Before it (as is most probable) were laid up the miraculous bread, that was preserved in a pot, and the miraculous rod of Aaron, that blossomed and brought fort fruit. The first was a standing memorial of the choice regard of Heaven to the whole nation of Israel: and the last was a perpetual sign of his favour to the priestly tribe of Levi, and family of Aaron. Above it two cherubims of beaten gold, arising out of the two ends of the mercy-seat, and looking towards it and one another, streched out their wings. Besides these small cherubims, there were other two of gigantic

stature, which Solomon reared up in the most holy place of the temple. But their precise shape is perhaps impossible for us, at this distant of time certainly to be defined. This was that venerable utensil which it was death to touch or look into, unless by the persons appointed for that purpose. The sudden fate of Uzzah, and the severe correction of the men of Bethshemish, are dreadful instances of its vengeance. When Israel marched through the wilderness, the ark is said to have gone before, and explored a place of rest for the congregation. The parted wave of Jordan, and the falling walls of Jericho, confessed its power. Once it was a prisoner in a Heathen temple; but, Palestine, short as your victory, small was your cause of triumph! Soon were the proud enemies obliged to refound their spoil, and Dagon could neither defend himself nor his worshippers from perpetual infamy. Once it blessed the house of Obed-edom. But at last, after many removals, the splendid temple of Solomon received it for several ages where, as is most likely, it perished in the common ruin of that holy and beautiful house. But the subject of our present inquiry, is the mystic signification of that sacred instrument, for the reception of which, both the tabernacle was reared up, and the temple built.

And, first, it was a visible representation of the throne of JEHOVAH, the King of Israel, whose royal palace was the temple. The law in the midst of the ark, on which he sat, signified the equity of

his government, or that justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. The cherubims at both ends of the mercy-seat, were doubtless emblematical figures of the blessed elect angels that surround his throne, and fly swiftly to execute his high commands. The gold of which they were framed, may signify the purity of their essence. The number two, may perhaps denote the perfect harmony, and mutual love of the innumerable company of angels. The position of their faces towards each other, may intimate the same thing. The adoring attitude of their bodies, may represent the profound veneration they have for their eternal Sovereign. And their flying posture, (for their wings were expanded, & touched one another,) did surely indicate the expeditious alacrity with which they fulfil the heavenly commissions.

It was also a repository for the tables of the law, which were the instrument of that solemn covenant made betwixt God and the peculiar people, (an emblem of the covenant of Adam); and hence it was a perpetual pledge of the divine favour and protection to their nation, if they fulfilled their obligations to the king of heaven; and a witness against them, if they should prove unfaithful. The gold and cedar was a fit emblem of the invaluable worth, the sportless purity, and perpetual duration of the inclosed law. In imitation of this ordinance of the God of Jacob, the sacred chests of the Heathen

seem to have been invented, to contain the holy books or mysteries of their superstition.

But especially, it may be considered as a figure of Jesus Christ, the promised Messias, whom all the holy things seem to have pointed out with one consent. There will appear to be no contemptible likeness betwixt him and this most holy vessel, if we attend unto the following things: the materials of which it was framed; the depositum which it contained; its ornaments; its uses; its virtues; and, lastly, its removals from one place to another, till it rested in the temple.

The materials of the ark were cedar and gold. What hinders us from this to think upon the constitution of his wonderful person, whose humanity is like the cedar, the fruit of the earth, but not subject to corruption: and his divinity, like gold in the ark, embosoms his human nature, ennobles, but is not blendid with it?—The depositum it contained, was the second tables of the law; for the first tables were broken before. In Jesus Christ we may see that law which we had broke preserved inviolate, and perfectly fulfilled in the immaculate obedience of his holy life, who says of himself, "I delight to "do thy will, O God, thy law is within my heart*." —Its ornaments were the border of gold resembling a crown; which reminds us of the Messiah's regal dignity; and the cherubims of glory, which signified, say some, the two natures of that glorious

* Psal. xl. 8.

person who was signified by the whole workmanship; says others, the twofold church of Jews and Gentiles: but rather they were emblems of the angels, these bright and glorious creatures, who are supported in their happy state by Jesus Christ, as the cherubims were by the ark;—who desire to look into the mystery of man's redemption, and pry into it with the most unwearied attention, the most sublime satisfaction, the highest wonder, and the profoundest adoration; & who are all ministering spirits, ascending & descending upon the Son of man. The uses of the ark were various & important. Here God was enthroned. So God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Here the law was covered from all eyes. So Jesus Christ, our true propitiatory, interposes himself betwixt us and that condemning law, which never fails to curse and kill all who presume to meddle with it, but as fulfilled in him; for when the commandment comes without him who fulfilled it, sin will revive, and, like the men of Bethshemish, we will die.—Here oracles were given, and "Here," said God to Moses, "will I meet with thee, and commune with thee, "from between the cherubims before the mercy-seat, "upon the ark of the testimony*." So Christ is the meeting place of God with man, in whom he deigns to reveal his gracious will and pleasure to the fallen creature: hence is he called "the World of God †;" and is said to declare God the Father, who never

* Exod. xxv. 22. † Rev. xix. 13.

can be seen by any man. And lastly, here prayers were presented, and offerings were accepted: for the most holy Israelite durst not approach the presence of JEHOVAH, but as he sat upon the mercy seat sprinkled with blood. Nor could the holiest Christian presume to hope for the acceptance of his best duties, were it not for the mercy of God in Christ Jesus.—The virtues of the ark are such as these. It searched out a resting place for Israel in the wilderness. So Christ is to his people the breaker of their way, who goes before them, gives them rest, and prepares for them a place. It opened a passage for the ransomed tribes through the river Jordan. O Jesus, by thee we safely pass through the Jordan of death, and have abundant entrance ministered into the heavenly kingdom, because these waters shall not overflow them who have his presence with them, according to his promise! It overturned the walls of Jericho, when carried round them seven days. So shall the walls of Babylon fall, and every high thing that exalts itself against God, be cast down by the preaching of his gospel, who is the power of God, and wisdom of God. It overthrew Dagon of the Philistines in his own temple, maimed his brute image, and utterly abolished that monstrous idol. So shall he that sits in the temple of God, and shews himself that he is God, be destroyed by the spirit of his mouth, and brightness of his coming. It sanctified the places to which it came, in the opinion of Solomon himself; and blessed the

house of Obed-edom, where it transiently resided. It is the presence of Christ that makes us holy and happy; and in him we are blessed with every spiritual blessing.—The removals of the ark from place to place in the wilderness, and in Canaan, till it rested in the temple, shall we say, bear some faint resemblance to the humbled Redeemer, going about doing good while he was upon the earth, until the everlasting doors of heaven were opened to receive him? Or, was the bearing of the ark about upon the shoulders of the Levites, a figure of the ministers of Christ bearing his name among the Gentiles, in all the corners of the world? The staves remained always in the ark; perhaps to intimate, that no place or nation is absolutely secure against his departure from them, who have no suitable esteem for his gracious presence with them, in the dispensation of the eternal word.

It is long since the Babylonians destroyed this glory of Israel; but we have an ark whereunto they have no right to approach who serve the tabernacle. John saw it in the heavenly temple. The Old-Testament ark, like the covenant it confirmed, is vanished away. But the New-Testament Ark, in whom the new covenant stands fast, shall abide for ever in the presence of JEHOVAH. Nor is it death for any to look into this ark; for the Word of life was looked upon with the eyes, and handled with the hands of men. Let it be our one and chief

desire, that all the days of our life we may abide in his house, behold his beauty, and enquire in his temple.

SECONDLY, THE ORDINANCE OF THE GOLDEN TABLE.

THE table of the shew-bread was a principal part of the apparatus of the middle court or sanctuary, and a piece of very nice and costly workmanship. Like the ark, it was made of gold and cedar, ornamented with a golden border and crown, furnished with golden rings for carriage, and with golden dishes and other necessary utensils. On this pure table were laid twelve loaves, according to the number of tribes. They were made of fine flour, and piled up in two rows, crowned with frankincense. Thus they stood continually before the Lord, but were renewed every sabbath morning; and the stale bread was to be eaten by none but the priests in the holy place.

As to the meaning of this service, perhaps it was a continual thank-offering, whereby the Israelites testified their gratitude for the fine wheat of Canaan. But it seems likewise no contemptible figure of Christ Jesus, both personal and mystical; which is to be now declared.

And, first, it seems to represent Christ Jesus himself. It was a golden table, to denote his most invaluable worth, who is precious to them that be-

lieve. It was a crowned table, to signify his royal dignity, and the royal dainties wherewith he feeds his people, who eat the bread of the mighty. It was a moveable table: for the dispensations of his gospel is not confined to any prticular spot of earth, but has been frequently removed from one place to another. It was a furnished table, furnished both with provisions and vessels. In Christ we have all things pertaining to life and godliness; for "it hath pleased the Father, that in him all fullness should dwell*."

But let us consider the provision wherewith this table was loaded, and we shall see how fitly it quadrades to Jesus Christ.—It was covered with loaves or bread. What bread is to the body that Christ is to the soul, that is—the staff of life. Like bread, he is of the most universal use, of the most absolute necessity, and prepared for our spiritual food by various sufferings, as bread-corn is bruised. The loaves were fine flour. Jesus Christ is the finest of wheat, in whom there was found no bran of corruption, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners.——They were twelve in number, for every tribe a loaf. There is enough in Christ to supply the wants of his people, who may say, "Out of his fulness have we all received†."—They were continually present before the Lord. Jesus Christ is the Angel of his presence, who appears before the Lord continually as

* Col. i. 19. † John i. 16.

the representative of Israel.—They were crowned with frankincense. This is an emblem of the acceptableness of his sacrifice and intercession, or of their sweet-smelling savour unto God.—They were renewed every Sabbath morning by the priests. For the doctrine of Jesus Christ, or the spiritual provision exhibited on the table of the gospel, in order that it may prove always palatable to the hearers, the ministers of the word ought, as the legal priests, to renew it every Sabbath; not indeed by preaching novel doctrines, but by cloathing old truths in a new dress, or, to use the expression of our Lord, "bringing out of their treasury things new and old*." By this means the attention will be fed, weariness relieved, and appetite increased.—. They were eaten by the priests in the holy place, after they were removed from the presence-table. So Christ the bread of God must be eaten, that is, believed in, that we may receive from him both life and strength. The ministers of the gospel must feed on the same Christ whom they exhibited unto others; and all the saints are that royal priesthood, whose privilege it is to eat this bread of God. And if others are admitted to the most holy ordinances, the table of the Lord is contemptible indeed. I shall only add, that unless this heavenly bread had first presented unto the Lord, he would not been presented to men as food to the hungry soul.

* Matth. xiii. 52.

Let us now consider the shew bread, as an emblem of the church which is his body, of which it is said, "We being many are one bread *" Indeed the number of the loaves, corresponding to the number of the tribes, did certainly intimate, that they represented the Israel of God. Christ is that corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died, that he might not abide alone; and from him believers grow as their parent-root. Christ is that golden table that continually supports and presents them before the Lord. They were crowned with frank incense; for their prayers are directed to God as incense; and the intercession of Jesus Christ persumes at once their person and works, as with all the powders of the merchant. They were disposed in two regular rows; which may denote the comely order of the churches. The were renewed every week; so one generation of Christians succeeds another. Or perhaps we may take occasion to think, how distasteful unto God are stale and moudly professors, who have left their first love, and are, like Ephraim, as cakes not turned. They were, lastly, to be eaten by the priests. May we be allowed thus to allegorize this last particular? When the faithful have served their generation, and are removed from further usefulness in this world, they are not rejected as useless altogether, but they become the inheritance of Jesus Christ, the true priest;

* 1 Cor. x. 17.

as the the old bread was not cast away, but fed upon by the typical priesthood in the holy place.

THIRDLY, THE ORDINANCE OF THE GOLDEN CNADLESTICK.

OVER against the table there was a golden candlestick set on the north side, that the sanctuary might never be dark. It consisted of a large stalk, with five branches, and every branch was in three different places adorned with a bowl like an almond, a knop, and a flower. The tongs and snuff-dishes were pure gold, as the candlestick itself. At the extremities of the stalk and branches were seven lamps, which were fed with pure olive-oil, and lighted every evening by the priests, who burned incense at the same time.

Was not this an emblem of the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world? Not only is Jesus Christ, in many texts of scripture, resembled unto the light of the sun, but it is said in one place, "Thou art my lamp, O Lord and the "Lord will enlighten my daryness*." The pure beaten gold of this candlestick may denote the spotless holiness, and the invaluable worth of Jesus, who was beaten, if we may so speek, with the hammer of adversity, and made perfect through suffering. The oil that nourished the lamps, is an emblem of the Holy Ghost, that anointed him to pearch glad tidings to

* 2 Sam. xxii. 19.

the meek. The number of the lamps, which was seven, imports the perfection of his light. The sanctuary where they shone, is the church; and the priests that trimmed them, are the ministers of the gospel, whose office is to elucidate the mystery of Christ. The light which was shed all around from this candlestick, may represent the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus, which shines into the hearts of all the royal priesthood; or the light of the scriptures, which are the rays of Jesus Christ, and to which we do well to take heed, as to the light that shineth in a dark place.

That the golden candlestick was also a figure of the church, will appear very probable, when we consider, that Zacharias, an Old-Testament prophet, saw, in the vissions of God, as her emblem, a golden candlestick, supplied with golden oil from two olive trees; and John, a New-Testament apostle, when he was in the Spirit, beheld our great Hight Priest in sacerdotal robes, walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, which were the seven Asian churches. But let us, for further proof, observe the likeness of this sacred utensil to the whole and every particular church.

We shall first, consider the candlestick itself.—Its use was to receive the materials of the light, and then to spread it abroad. Even so the church receives the truth in the first place; and then holds it forth, by purity of doctrine, and sanctity of life.

Its matter was pure and beaten gold. The church may be a lamp despised in the thoughts of worldly men, and esteemed as an earthen pitcher; yet in the eyes of the Lord she is comparable to fine gold. O how the gold becomes dim in the presence of faith and holiness! She is pure gold, being purged from the dross of reigning corruption, by the blood, by the Spirit, and by the word of Christ. She is beaten gold, being partaker of the afflictions of the gospel. By these means she is a vessel made meet for the Master's use. For shape, it was divided into six branches, united by one common stalk. This signifies the coalition of all true churches and sound believers into one great society, which is founded upon their common relation to Jesus Christ, the center of union. The ornaments of almonds, knops, and flowers, which decorated all the branches, may denote the various gifts and graces with which every church should be adorned, that she may with greater dignity hold forth the word of life. The tongs and snuff-dishes were not more necessary appendages to the golden candlestick, than church-censures, and brotherly admonitions, are to every society of Christians. By means of these instruments the lamps burned clear, and the floor of the holy place was not sullied. So the discipline of the church is an excellent mean to preserve the lamp of the gospel light from dimness, and the temple of the Lord from defilement, by the superfluity of naughtiness.

The oil burning in the seven lamps of the candle-

stick, is an emblem of the Holy Ghost, in his various gifts, who resides in the church; is compared unto oil, and unto fire: and of whom the apostle John speaks in this enigmetical manner, when he saw the visions of the Almighty, "And there were "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, "which are the seven spirits of God*." So much for the candlestick itself.

Let us now glance at the ministry of the priests about this holy vessel. They were to supply it with oil, to trim the lamps, and light them every evening, and to burn incense at the same time. Might not this signify the watchful care of the minister of the sanctuary and true tabernacle, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, imparts unto them all necessary supplies of the heavenly unction, quenches not the smoaking flax, but strengthens the things that remain, and are ready to die; while at the same time he offers unto God the greatful incense of his prevalent intercession in their behalf? And may it not further adumbrate the duty and office of all the ministers of the gospel, who, in the evening of the world, are to light the lamp ordained for God's Anointed? "They shall teach "Jacob thy judgments, O Lord, and Israel thy "law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole "burnt-offerings upon thine altar†." It is their province, while they direct unto God the incense of fervant pray, to make their lamps burn clear, by

* Rev. iv. 5. † Deut. xxxiii. 10.

supplying them with the oil of pure doctrine, and trimming them with the tongs of wholesome discipline, and salutary admonition. "For Zion's sake "let them not hold their peace, and for Jerusalem's "sake let them not rest, till the righeousness there- "of go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof "as a lamp that burneth*."

FOURTHLY, THE ORDINANCE OF THE GOLDEN ALTAR.

IN the inner part of the sanctuary, there stood a four square altar of Shittim-wood, overlaid with gold. It was encompassed with a golden crown, furnished with golden rings for carriage, like the ark and table of Shew-bread, and graced with four golden horns at its four corners. To this secret altar none but the priests were to approach; not to offer propitiatory sacrifices, as upon the altar of burnt-offering, but to burn incense of sweet spices morning and evening before the Lord. The confection of this sacred prefume is minutely prescribed, with a strict prohibition of imitating it for any other use. It was a figure of the intercession of the great High Priest before the throne, as the altar of burnt-offering was a figure of his satisfactory obligation upon the earth. Let us first attend unto the altar, and next unto the incense.

The altar itself was, first, a golden crowned altar; which signifies the glorious dignity of the royal In-

* Is. lxii. 1.

tercessor, who is a priest upon his throne, and is set down on the right hand of the heavenly Majesty.—It was a square altar, equally respecting the four corners of the world; to denote how accessible he is to all the ends of the earth.—It was a moveable altar, capable of being transported where-ever the church of Israel went: an emblem of his perpetual presence in all places where his name is recorded, or where his people are afflicted. A jail, an isle of Patmos, a lion's den, a fish's belly, a fiery furnace, are all alike to him, who never leaves, never forsakes his chosen, and his called.—It was a hidden altar, to which none approached except the sons of Levi. To know Christ as their interceding Priest, is the distinguished priviledge of all the royal priesthood. These only see him by faith, whom the world seeth no more. But as the way to the golden altar of incense was to pass by the brazen altar of burnt-offering; so none can come to Jesus, as ever-living to make intercession for them, who come not to him as dying once to atone for their guilt, and put away their sin by the sacrifice of himself.—It was a horned altar. And what should these four horns at its four corners portend, but the strength and prevalence of his intercession, whom the Father heareth always, and who is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him, from the four winds of heaven?—It was an altar stained with blood: for though no sacrifices for expiation were offered upon it, yet Aaron was commanded

to tip its horns every year with the blood of the atonements. The blood of Jesus Christ the righteous is the strength of his advocacy. This blood presented for ever before the throne of God, enforces all his suits with louder cries than ever the blood of Abel sent from the ground, imploring vengeance on the first murderer.

From the altar, let us come to the incense burned upon it. It represents both the merits of Jesus Christ, and the prayer of all saints.

The merits of Jesus Christ is that incense in which the prayers, and tears, and works of all the saints are clad, and wherein they ascend like Manoah's angel, before the presence of JEHOVAH—That incense was composed of sweet spices, that shed a rich perfume; but not so grateful to men as the sweet-smelling sacrifice of Christ was savoury unto God—That incense was burned in the sanctuary, while the people were praying without. The appearing of our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary with the sweet odour of his merits, by no means supercedes the prayers of saints on earth. "For these things will God be," not only solicited by the intercession of his Son, but "inquired of by the house of Israel, "that he may do it for them*."—Than incense was continually burned before the Lord, and was a perpetual incense throughout their generations. The intercession of Jesus Christ is everlasting, because he ever liveth. Never, never

* Ezek xxxvi. 37.

shall it be discontinued, till all its ends are fully reached, and the last elect vessel be prayed home to glory.—That incense was not to be counterfeited, or imitated for any other purpose. Detested be the impiety of that harlot-church, who confides in the merits of any saint, living or dead, ascribing, on whatsoever pretence, the Mediator's glory to another. But the time approaches, when this counterfeit incense, the commodity of Babylon, shall no more be bought by the merchants of the earth.

The prayers of saints are also said to be directed as incense before the Lord, and are resembled to odours preserved in vails of gold, by a New-Testament writer. Prayer is that incense, which, according to Malichi's prediction, shall be offered to the name of the Lord in every place. Was the holy incense compounded of various sweet spices? The graces of the Holy Ghost are the precious ingredients in the effectual prayer of the righteous. Some of them were beaten very small; prehaps to intimate, that brokenness of heart, and contrition of spirit, which the high and lofty One requires in the worshippers at his foot stool.—The fire that burned the incense, may denote the fervency of spirit required in acceptable worship.—But take heed of the sparks of your kindling, and lift up the holy hands without wrath: for the incense must not be kindled with fire from the kitchen but the altar.—Was the incense burned morning and evening continually?

And can we reasonably think the incense of prayer and praise should be less frequently addressed to the God that dwells in the heavens? Jesus Christ is the altar & the Priest who stands with his golden censer; by him your incense of praise, shall go up for a memorial before God, and meet with gracious acceptance. Without him even incense is an abomination unto God; any the most solemn duties are a smoke in his nostrils, and a fire that burneth all the day.

FIFTHLY, THE ORDINANCE OF THE BRAZEN ALTAR.

LET us next consider the altar of burnt-offering which was a chief part of the holy furniture, both of the tabernacle and temple. Its materials were brass and cedar-wood; its shape foursquare; its station was in the outward court. It protected criminals that fled unto it, sanctified gifts, and alimented the priests. It was ornamented with four horns of brass flourishing from its corners, and upon it the sacred fire was kept perpetually alive. The ceremonies of its consecration lasted for seven days: & it is called by God an altar most holy, that should impart a legal holiness to every thing that touched it. In ordinary case it was not lawful to offer sacrifices upon any other altar but this alone.

That Jesus Christ is the antitype of this altar, the apostle to the Hebrews permits us not to doubt; for,

speaking of him, he says, "We have an altar, where-
"of they have no right to eat who serve the taber-
"nacle*." He says not, altars, as if they were many, but an altar, speaking of one; and this altar is Christ. As the intercession of Jesus Christ was typified by the golden altar of incense, so the altar of burnt-offering represented both his satisfaction in general, and his Godhead in particular. Let us begin with the first.

It represented the person of our Redeemer, as the propitiation for our sins. It was a brazen altar. Was it not the same glorious person whom Ezekiel saw like a man of brass, with a line of flax in his hand to measure the temple; and whose feet are described, in the visions of John, like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace? Brass is a cheep and common metal. When by himself he purged our sins, he shone not with golden lustre; for his visage was marred more than any man's, and his form than the sons of men. Brass is a strong metal, and fit to endure the fire. Our strength was not the strength of stones, our flesh was not of brass, to dwell with devouring fire, to abide with everlasting burnings: but Christ was the mighty One, who felt the power of God's anger, and was not devoured by the fiery indignation.—It was a horned altar. This signifies the strength of his atonement, both to satisfy the justice of God, and pacify the consciences of men. —It was a four square altar; an emblem of his per-

* Heb. xiii. 10.

petual stability, who is the same to day, yesterday, and for ever—It was a public altar. For the death of Christ was to be a transaction of the most public kind—It was a burning altar, on which the fire never went out. The Holy Ghost is that eternal Spirit of judgment and of burning, through whom he offered up himself unto God, and who dwells for ever in the Son. With this holy fire the great High Priest inflamed his legal sacrifice of atonement; and with this holy fire the royal priesthood ought to kindle their moral sacrifice of praise, which they offer by him continually.—It was an only altar, and by the laws of Moses, admitted not any rival. So Jesus Christ is the one Mediator between God and man. To multiply mediators is no less condemned by the New-Testament, than to multiply altars by the Old. —It was an altar most holy that sanctified all gifts. Whether we present unto God the meat-offering of alms, the drink offering of tears, the peace-offering of thanksgiving, the heave-offering of prayer, or the whole burnt-offering of body and soul, by him alone they are sanctified and accepted, as the altar sanctified the gift.—It was an altar that protected criminals who fled unto it; though, for some crimes, they were to be dragged from it to suffer condign punisment. In Jesus Christ the guilty sinner finds a refuge from legal condemnation; nor can they fail of making peace with him, who by faith take hold of his strength, be their crimes ever so attrocious.—It was an altar that nourished the Levitical priest-

hood who served at it, and were partakers with it. Even so the happy persons who are made priests unto God, and partakers of Christ, receive from him, not a natural, but a spiritual and eternal life: "For he that eateth me," himself declares, "shall live by me*."

But in a particular manner his Deity seems fit to be called the altar on which he offered his humanity: for he was his own altar no less than ours. It was not the wooden cross on which he died, that served him for an altar. Far less can the material table on which the holy memorials are exhibited in the sacrament of the supper, deserve any such glorious epithet. Hear what himself says about the altar, and the gift. "Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift†?" Will any dare to say, that the wooden cross was greater than the soul and body of the Redeemer who expired on it? or that the table of the supper is greater than the consecrated symbols of his body and blood? If it be impossible to find any thing greater than the humanity of the Lord and Saviour, except his own divinity, his own divinity, and nothing else, must be the altar, Did the altar support the gift or victim while it was burning upon it? It was the Godhead of Christ that supported the manhood from sinking under these direful sufferings he patiently endured. Did the altar sanctify the gifts that touched it? It was the Deity

* John vi. 57. † Matth. xxiii. 19.

of Christ that sanctified the gift of his humanity, and imparted a dignity and value to the sacrifice of his body and soul. The sins of many are fully expiated by the sufferings of one, because he is God, and there is none else; besides him there is no Saviour.

Blessed be God for such a High Priest; such a temple; such a sacrifice; such an altar of burnt-offering and incense. We have an altar, not only in the midst of the land of Canaan, but in the midst of the land of Egypt, to which the sons of the strangers may bring their sacrifices. We have an altar which God will never cast off, a sanctuary which he will never abhor. The great atoning sacrifice is already offered up, what remains for us but to render unto a gracious God the calves, not of the stall, but of the lips, and sacrifice of praise continually.

SIXTHLY, THE ORDINANCE OF THE BRAZEN LAVER.

THE divers washings injoined in the law of Moses, were no doubt a very significant branch of that ritual œconomy: for not only did the Heathen nations adopt this custom in their false worship of imaginary gods; but a shadow of it is still retained in the Christian baptism, the initiating ordinance of the church. The daily lustration of the Levitical priesthood, we shall presently glance at.

At the entrance of the tabernacle of the congregation, before you come to the brazen altar, was set, by the appointment of the Lord, a pure vessel, or laver of polished brass. The materials of it were furnished by some religious women, who complimented their looking glasses for this purpose; consecrating these instruments, perhaps of vanity, to the sacred use of adoring the worship of the true God. Though the shape of this vessel is not minutely described by Moses, it was certainly so contrived, as the water it contained might be emptied by vents or pipes: for the priests were ordered, on pain of death, to wash their hands and feet at this laver when they went into the tabernacle, or approached unto the altar. At first the washing-pot was probable of small size; but when Solomon built his magnificient temple, he made also a laver of large dimensions, which on account of the huge quantity of water it was capable to hold, was called a molten sea, and set it on a base of twelve oxen of brass, not without the direction of Heaven, as we may well presume.

Did the pure and holy God intend by this law only to require from his worshippers the putting away the filth of the flesh, which might be done with material water, and by such as had neither their hearts clean, nor their hands pure? Is washing the body with the purest water, an adequate preparation for coming into the presence of that God, in whose sight the heavens are not clean? Far be it from us

to harbour so foolish a thought. The purification of the soul from spiritual pollution, was the thing intended by this carnal ordinance. The laver is Jesus Christ himself, who cleanses all the royal priesthood from the foul contagion of sin, by the word which he speaks unto them, by the Spirit which he sheds upon them, and by the blood he poured out for them. Was the laver a pure and cleanly vessel? This may denote the innocence and spotless purity of the glorious Immanuel, together with his fitness to preserve all that are in him holy and unblameable. Was it a large and capacious vessel, and therefore stiled a sea? This may remind us of that vast and inexhaustible fulness which ever dwells in the New-Testament laver, by which he is able to sprinkle many nations, and wash away the crimes of all who come unto God by him. Was it an open vessel, that stood in the most public situation? A prophet stiles the blessed Redeemer, "a fountain "opened in the house of David, and to the inhabi- "tants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness*." Was it a consecrated vessel? for Moses anointing the laver and his foot with the holy anointing oil. Christ Jesus was consecrated for ever more to his saving office, and anointed with the Holy Ghost in the most ample measure. Was it supported by twelve oxen in the temple of Solomon? These brazen figuers, that looked to all the winds of heaven, may not absurdly be viewed as emblems of the

* Zech. xiii. 1.

twelve apostles, who bore Christ's name to the Gentiles; who poured the doctrine of salvation in all the quarters of the world. For not only does the number of the oxen correspond to the number of the apostles of the Lamb; but the servants of Christ are in other passages held forth under the emblem of these robust, laborious, and useful animals.

But the use which the preists under the law were commanded to make of this vessel on all occasions, under the severest penalty, is the most remarkable circumstance we are to attend unto. They were to wash their hands and feet with the water of this vessel when they entered the tabernacle, on pain of death. These priests are figures not only of all office-bearers in the church, who ought to be pure and holy; but of all the holy nation of Christians; who having a great High Priest over the house of God, ought to draw near with true hearts, and in the full assurance of faith, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water. It is true, they are washed and justified already, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God: yet still they need to wash their hands and feet. The sins of daily walk demand fresh application to the laver of his atoning blood, even from the holiest saints on earth. Faith is the hand by which this purifying water is applied to the conscience. Would we approach to God in holy duties? would we ascend the hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy place? then, in a spe-

cial manner, must we lay aside all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, resolving, with the sweet singer of Israel, "I will wash mine hands in "innocency, and so will I compass thine altar, O "Lord*." But whoever they be that prefer the mire of their sin to the laver of his blood, think to wash away their stains with nitre and soap of their own righteousness, they shall die before the Lord, be excluded from his beatific presence, and become an abhorring unto all flesh for evermore.

SEVENTHLY, THE ORDINANCE OF THE ANOINTING OIL.

IN Jesus Christ we have also the antitype of the legal unction, no less than of the divers washings and sacrifices, which is to be declared. The Jewish lawgiver is commanded, in a very particular manner, to take unto him of the principal spices, five hundred shekels of pure myrrh—half as much of sweet cinnamon,—five hundred shekels of cassia, —and half as much of sweet calamus. These precious ingredients were to be compounded by the apothecary's art in a hin of olive-oil. The use of this holy oil was to anoint the tabernacle, and its furniture, and Aaron with his sons. But it was strictly forbidden to apply it to any other use, to put it upon any stranger, or to make any thing like it, after the composition of it. "This," said God "to the Israelites, shall be a holy anointing oil to

* Psal. xxvi. 6.

"me, throughout your generations*." Let us come to the concealed mystery of this ordinace.

Then was this type fulfilled, when the Lord's Anointed was endued with the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, which God gave not by measure unto him. Hear what himself declares by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is up-"on me, because he hath anointed me†." And therefore are the deciples of Christ stiled Christians, because it is supposed they have also an unction from the holy One.

Surely it is not without sufficient reasons, that anointing with oil, and receiving the the gift of the Holy Ghost, are phrases of the same import in the language of inspiration. If oil is of a healing nature, and fit to appease the anguish of rankled wounds, the Spirit of God is that mollifying ointment, by which the wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores, occasioned by the fall, are gradually healed, until at last the cure is so completely wrought, that not a scar remains. If oil is of a beautifying quality, and makes the human face to shine; by the benign agency of the sanctifying Spirit our souls are made as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and are presented at last in presence of his glory, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. If oil is savoury to the taste, imparting to other esculents an agreeable flavour; without the Spirit what is the word itself but a dry morsel? but when he sheds his

* Exod. xxx. 31. † Is. lxi. 1.

kindly influences, then do we find the word and eat it; it is to us the joy and rejoicing of our heart. If oil is of an exhilarating virtue, greatly refreshing the animal spirits of them who are anointed, this puts us in mind of the reviving operations of the Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, the true oil of gladness, whose fruit is joy and peace. In the same manner we might apply the strengthening, softning, preserving, insinuating properties of this staple commodity of Canaan, to the like operations of the divine Spirit.

But let us rather reflect upon the special qualities of the holy anointing oil, which Moses made according to the divine dispensatory. It was compounded of various costly ingredients; to represent, perhaps, the great variety of heavenly gifts and graces, which are conferred by the Spirit of the Lord, and the diversities of his operations.—It shed a most delightful prefume, even to a proverb, when poured on the head of Aaron. Of a greater than he it is said, "All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes "and cassia*:" and again, "Because of the savour "of thy good ointments, therefore do the virgins "love thee†."—The quantity which Moses made was considerably large, and sufficient to anoint both the priests, the tabernacle, and all its sacred vessels. May not this faintly adumbrate the fulness of the Spirit, by which he is able, not only to anoint our great High Priest, but likewise all the sancti-

* Psal. xlv. 8. † Song i. 3.

fied vessels that are made meet for the Master's use? It was unlawful to make any thing like it; and the Jews affirm, with great probability, that it was never but once prepared; though they fabulously add, that it wasted not by use for many generations. This may denote how displeasing it is to God to counterfeit his holy Spirit; and we are to try the spirits, whether they be of God, so in all generations there is but one Spirit, as there is one body mystical, and one hope of our calling.—The prohibition of putting any of it on a stranger, may signify, that the spiritual unction is the peculiar privilege of saints, which, to use the expression of our Lord, the world cannot receive. And, lastly, as this anointing oil did sanctify the persons and things to which it was applied, consecrated them for ever to the service of God, and entitled them to his protection: so the happy souls who have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is of God, are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, are sealed unto the day of redemption; and the unction they have received, abideth in them. Because of this anointing, their yokes shall be destroyed. "Touch not "mine anointed, ye enemies of their salvation," will the Lord say, "and do no harm to my peculiar people." Let others drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but give us O Lord, this holy oil for evermore.

* Psal. cv. 15.

IV. THE LAND OF CANAAN.

THE land that flowed with milk and honey, deserves a particular consideration among the other shadows of good things to come. God promised to the fathers of the holy nation, "I will give "you the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance, "when they were but a few men in number, yea, "very few, and strangers in it*." This promise he performed to their posterity at the appointed time, when, under the conduct of Joshua, he drove out the Heathen, and planted them. But was this all which God provided for his people? Was the promise of an earthly inheritance, the blissful hope that supported the believing patriarchs in the few and evil days of their pilgrimage? Was there no other rest remaining for the people of God, but that which Joshua gave them? Then indeed they had been, upon the whole, considerable losers by their religion, and God would been ashamed to be called their God. It is true, the earthly Canaan was a delicious country, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and deeps, that sprang out of the valleys and hills; a land where they did eat butter of kine, and milk of sheep, fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats with the fat of kidneys of wheat; they did drink the pure blood of the grape:—a land whose rich soil produced whatever could fill the cup of joy, or load the board of plenty. But, alas! what cru-

* Gen. xii. 7. Psal. cv. 11. 12.

el mockery had it been to propose no sublimer enjoyments than these to the lovers of his blessed name? Are such things an adequate portion to the immortal spirit in man? Besides, the patriarchs themselves sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, and had not so much as a grave to call their own till bought with money. And their posterity, the people of his holiness, possessed it but a little time. What was the language of all this? Did it not proclaim, in loudest accents, both to the patriarchs and their seed, "Arise ye, and depart; for this is "not your final rest?* I have provided for you, O my "people, a better heavenly country,† of which this pleasant land is but the pledge & shadow." Beyond all doubt, the godly partriarchs regarded the promised land in this amiable light: and it is hard to imagine how Moses, that wise and great lawgiver, could been so passionately desirous to see, before he died, that good land beyond Jordan, if he had not considered it as a pledge of God's eternal rest. Let us add to all this, the sublime encomiums that are every where bestowed upon Canaan, in Moses, and the prophets. Surely there was nothing about that little spot of earth to intitle it to such high elogiums as "the glory of all lands,‡ the pleasant land,‖ and "thy land, O Immanuel."§ But when we view it as a type of the heavenly inheritance, the propriety of these grand epithets immediately discovers itself. Let us see where the resemblance lies.

*Mic. ii 10. †Heb. xi. 16. ‡Ezk. xx. 6. ‖Ps. cvi. 24. §Isa. viii. 8.

Canaan was a land originally possessed by other nations, whom the Lord drove out for their wickedness. It is revealed in the scriptures, that the celestial mansions were first inhabited by these once pure, but now apostate spirits, who, for rebellion against their eternal Sovereign, were driven out from God and bliss, and their places in heaven shall know them again no more.

It was a land of amazing fertility. And such is the tender condescension of the heavenly Father as to describe, by earthly similitudes, that fulness of joy in his beatific presence, and all the rich variety of spiritual and eternal blessings. The plenty of Canaan, where they did eat bread without scarceness, was an emblem of the fatness of God's house. In heaven they shall not want any good thing that can be perfective of their natures, or conducive to their true felicity. There, to use the prophetic stile, "the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, "and the hills shall flow with milk*." They shall not hunger nor thirst, for the tree of life forever hangs out his golden fruit, and the water of life for ever rolls its silver stream.

It was a promised land; and promised long before the possession was actually taken, to the father of their nation, four hundred and thirty years before the law. Even so, eternal life was promised to Christ, the everlasting Father, not only antecedent to the good works of his seed, but before the world: and though the Lord is not slack concerning his

* Joel iii. 18.

promise, yet we have need of patience, even though we have done the will of God, that we may inherit the promises.

It was a land which their own righteousness could not merit, and which their own sword could not procure. Their induction into it is, in the strongest terms, ascribed to the sovereign grace and outstretched arm of God, who shewed to his people the power of his works, that he might give them the heritage of the Heathen. Should we vainly arrogate unto ourselves the honour of deserving, by our best works, our access to the heavenly inheritance, there is one that condemns us, even Moses in whom we trust. "Speak not thou in heart," says that great lawgiver to his people, "for my righ-"teousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess "this land. Not for thy righteousness, or the upright-"ness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess it; "for thou art a stiff-necked people."* Can any be so absurd as to affirm, that though the earthly inheritance could not, yet the heavenly inheritance may be merited by works of righteousness that we have done?

It was a land to which they went through many hardships and difficulties, through floods, and wildernesses, and legions of opposing foes. They had both real and imaginary discouragements to grapple with. Even so the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and through much tribulation we must enter

* Deut. ix. 4. 5. 6.

into it, though it be a purchased possession, and a promised inheritance. But as neither Sihon king of the Amorites, nor Og king of Bashan, nor the formidable giants the sons of Anak, could hinder the Israelites from their promised rest; so neither shall the power of the enemy, however great and dreadful, be able to retard the meanest saint, who takes unto him the whole armour of God, and with determined ardour fights the good fight of faith, and lays hold on eternal life.

It was a land which many despised, and through unbelief they came short of the promise, and their carcases fell in the wilderness. And many, alas! prefer the present pleasures of sin to all the ravishing prospects of eternity. Instead of seeking this better country all the days of their life, it is the land which they abhor.

It was a land which the Israelites obtained not till Moses was dead. None are brought to heaven, till they be dead to the law by the body of Christ. He is the true Joshua, or the Captain of salvation, who brings many sons unto glory, and conducts them through the Jordan of death, into the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

V. THE HOLY CITY OF JERUSALEM, AND THE HOLY HILL OF ZION.

BUT we must not forget thee, O Jerusalem, thou famed metropolis of Judea, nor that adjacent hill of Zion, the royal residence of David, where the temple also stood! Such glorious things have been

spoken of this city and mountain, as can by no means agree to them, when viewed only in the latter. It is long, very long, since Zion was ploughed as a field, since the palaces of Jerusalem have been levelled with the ground: "Go ye up upon her walls," said God to the victorious Roman army, "and take "away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's.* But still there is a spiritual Zion, on which the Lamb stands with his redeemed tribes; still there is a heavenly Jerusalem, to which the general assembly and church of the first-born are said to come. What should this spiritual Zion and heavenly Jerusalem be, but the militant and triumphant church of Christ, of which the earthly Zion, and the worldly Jerusalem, were the shadow and type? The old mount Zion was, equally with mount Sinai, a mount that might be touched, being a corporeal substance: and the old Jerusalem was a city that might be razed to its foundations: but the true Zion is a spiritual thing which cannot be touched; and the new Jerusalem is a city that hath foundation, and never can be removed.

There were hills more eminent than Zion, and towns more potent than Jerusalem; yet no mountain or city makes so distinguished a figure in the sacred page. It was not the natural elegance of Zion and Jerusalem, nor the fortified situation of these places, that could intitle them to such high elogiums as are every where bestowed upon them by the in-

* Jer. v. 10.

spired penmen. It is true indeed, the beautiful situation of mount Zion, and the compact form of Jerusalem, which was comely to a proverb, deserved their due praises; and their strength, both of nature and art, was far from being despicable. It may be also affirmed, that the Holy Ghost intended a faint representation of the invincible strength, and spiritual beauty of the church, in the strength and beauty of these holy places. But the extraordinary regard which the great JEHOVAH was pleased to testify towards his holy hill of Zion, and his beloved city of Jerusalem, is the chief thing which exalted that little hill above the great mountains of the world, and ennobled that metropolis above all other cities, however populous or magnificent. Why do ye leap, ye high hills? why do ye exult against the little hill of Zion, as if you were much superior to it? This is the hill in which God desires to dwell; the Lord will dwell in it for ever. This makes it a high hill; a high hill as the hill of Bashan: this renders it the perfection of beauty, and the joy of the whole earth. Exactly so, it is the distinguishing favour, and sovereign love of God, bestowed upon his church, that ennobles it beyond all other societies, however inferior to them in the beauty of earthly splendour, and worldly dominion. Let us see then what are the marks of the divine regard to these sacred places, which rendered them fit emblems of the real church in all ages,

They were places where God set his King, and the thrones of the house of David. That illustrious monarch, who founded the long line of the Jewish kings, having rescued Jerusalem and Zion from the Jebusites by force of arms, fortified them, and made them the places of his royal residence. The spiritual Zion is the city of the great King, that is, of Jesus Christ, who won it out of the hands of idolatrous Gentiles, who boasted of their idols, though lame and blind. Christ is the true David, who indeed was signified by all the kings of Israel, his lineal successors, who had gained this notable victory over the Gentile world; and in those very places where superstition reigned, has built his church, fixed his throne, and issued forth his righteous laws. If it was a distinguishing privilege of the ancient Zion and Jerusalem, to be the seat of a king of Heaven's election, how greatly superior is the new Jerusalem and gospel Zion, in bringing the seat of the King of kings, who sits upon the throne, and has the key of David! "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of "Zion, thy King shall never perish, and great is the "holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."*

They were places where God established his worship, and to which the tribes of the Lord resorted, because of his house at Jerusalem. Here the voice of his praise was heard, and sacrifices came with acceptance upon his altar. Jerusalem was the city of Jewish solemnities; and it is foretold by the

* Isa. xii. 6.

prophets, that the once hostile nations round about them, should pay them annual visits, and join in their holy festivals; yea, says the prophet Isaiah, "From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath "to Sabbath, shall all flesh come to worship before "the Lord of Hosts."* Now, it is evident, these high predictions were never accomplished in the earthly Zion and Jerusalem: yea, it is impossible they can be accomplished in their literal sense; the nature of things forbids it. But to the spiritual Zion, and heavenly Jerusalem, they have been fulfilled, and shall be more and more accomplished: for this holy hill may be found in all places of the world, and we may come to the city of the living God without a pilgrimage.

They were places for whose protection the divine providence has oftentimes awoke in a very extraordinary manner. Assembled kings have come with hostile design against these highly-favoured places; but instead of executing their cruel purpose the joyful Israelites, after departure, upon the most narrow inspection of their towers, palaces, and bulwarks, could not observe that any of them was battered down, or even defaced. This was not owing to their own strength, but to the presence of their God. But this glorious prerogative of being the peculiar care of Heaven is now transferred to the gospel-church, and all her true members. "They that trust in the Lord, shall be as mount Zion, that can never be removed."‡

* Isa. lxvi. 23. ‡ Psalm cxxv, 1.

FIRST, The FEAST of TABERNACLES.*

THE feast of tabernacles was one of the three grand festivals, in which all the males of Israel appeared before God in Jerusalem. It began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, which was four days after their mournful fast on the day of expiation, and was celebrated with all possible demonstrations of joy, and national gladness. It lasted eight days, and was the longest of all their solemnities; and the last day is called, in the New-Testament, *the great day of the feast.* Upon this day, we are informed, "Jesus stood and cried, If "any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink,"† alluding, as is commonly thought, to a ceremony they usually performed on that occassion with great pomp, though it be not commanded in the law.‡

* The acceptable celebration of the following articles being fixed, by divine appointment, to Jerusalem, they are introduced here to explain and illustrate the great importance of that city as a typical place, though, in another view, they might rather appear to belong to the head of typical things.

† John vii. 37.

‡ Tremellus, on John vii. 37. observes from the Talmud, that the Jews used, on the eighth day of this feast, to march round the altar seven times, singing Hosannah, with palm-branches in their hands, in memory of the Israelites, in the days of Joshua, their marching round Jericho seven times on the day of its fall. And besides, he informs us from the same authority, that on this day they drew water with great joy from the brook Siloam, at the foot of mount Zion, carried it to the priests in the temple, where they made a libation of it, mingled wine, upon the altar. In the time of drawing the water, they sung that cheerful ditty of the prophet Isaiah, "With joy "shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." They pretended that the prophets, Haggia and Zechariah, were the institutors of these rites; and they imagined that the Holy

On all the eight days they were to offer the sacrifices, which are minutely condescended upon by Moses. On the first day, thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year, and one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering. But it is worthy of our notice, that the bullocks diminished by one every subsequent day, till on the seventh day, but seventh were to be offered; and upon the eight and last, though the great day of the feast, they offered but one bullock. Did not God intend, by this gradual abatement, as the solemnity advauced, to exhibit unto his people a representation of the decaying nature of that dispensation they were under; that a time should come when these sacrafices should vanish away together, and give place to more spiritual obligations, which should please the Lord better than any bullock that has both horns and hoofs?

But the ceremony that gave the name to this joyful feast was their dwelling in booths the first seven days. These booths were made of olive branches, pine branches, myrtle-branches palm-branches, willows of the brook, and branches of other goodly trees, they cut down, and carried about in their

Ghost was so delighted with their carnal mirth and vociferation, as to impart to them, on this occasion, a prophetical afflatus; which happened, they say, to the prophet Jonah. The same writer observes, that as the Jews had miserably perverted this ordinance, by the addition of their own magical ceremonies; so Christ intended to reprove and silence their mad vociferations, when he cried with a loud voice, and to lead them away from the terrestial water to the water of life, and to himself the only scope of this feast, and of all other ceremonies.

hands. And that none might be at a loss to know the meaning of this ordinance, it is expressly declared by God himself, "That your generations may "know that I made the children of Israel to dwell "in booths, when I brought them up out of the land "of Egypt*." So prone are human minds to bury in oblivion those mercies that are past, that such rememorative institutions have been always held necessary and expedient. And surely the divine power and goodness displayed to the forefathers of the Jews, in miraculously providing all necessary accommodations for them in a desolate wilderness, deserved anniversary celebration, no less than their Exodus, or departure from Egypt. By this glad feast, they praised God for that good land into which he had brought them. "Our ancestors," as if they had said, "once wandered in the wilderness, in a soli- "tary way, they found no city to dwell in. But O "that men would praise the Lord for his goodness! "he led them forth by a way that was right, to go to "a city of habitation. Instead of these dreary pros- "pects our fathers had in the wilderness forty years "we, their posterity, are introduced to this delicious "country, where we sow fields, and plant vineyards, "that yield us fruits of increase, whose rich and "generous soil supplies us with these goodly trees, "from whence we pluck these verdant branches †." And we may add, with great probability, that their dwelling in booths so many days every year, was a

* Lev. xxiii. 43. † Psal. cvii.

solemn recognition, that they were still in a wandering state, though settled in Canaan; that they looked on themselves as strangers on the earth, even in the land of promise, as the patriarchs, from whom they sprung, confessed, by dwelling in tents and tabernacles in this same land; that they were but pilgrims here, and expected a better heavenly inheritance. Truly this has been the universal acknowledgment of good men in every age, who have esteemed their felicity to arise, not so much from their present enjoyments, as their future prospects. They have not only counted themselves pilgrims and sojourners, when struggling with adversity, and wandering from one country to another, without a fixed abode; but when elevated to the very summit of fortune, and enjoying the most profound repose which this terrestrial state affords. A tabernacle is the common appellation of a dwelling-place, in the Old-Testament; and in the New-Testament, the body, in which the soul is lodged, is stiled by the great apostle, *the earthly house of this tabernacle*,* which is dissolved by death, and resigns to a more permanent house, a building of God, eternal in the heavens. David, a glorious king, called his palace *the tabernacle of his house*;† and Jesus Christ, when he lived on the earth, at least after he began to act in his public character, had no home, but chose to be sometimes with one, and sometimes another of his followers. Whatever other rea-

* Cor. v. 1. †Psal. cxxxii. 3.

sons might be assigned for this conduct of our Lord, it seems as if he had designed to exhibit to all his genuine disciples, an illustrious example of superior indifference to all sublunary things, and to inculcate, in the strongest manner, upon their minds, "Arise ye, and depart; this is not your rest.*"—Set not your affections, O my people, on this transitory scene of things; remember the glorious hopes you entertain of admission into the celestial mansions, and learn of me not to regard this world as your home. Then do we keep the feast of tabernacles in a spiritual manner, when we raise our ardent hopes to those glad regions where God our Father, where Christ our elder Brother, and all the holy saints, and blessed angels, inhabit for evermore; when we view these earthly mansions, and even the grave itself, as but our short home, and places of transient residence, in comparison of eternal habitations.

But the feast of the tabernacles seems chiefly to be a figure of that holy joy, and spiritual gladness, which is both the duty and privilege of the true circumcision, who worship God in the spirit. It is long since this solemnity was discontinued; for God has made all their feast-days to cease; and there is no warrant in the scriptures for us under the Christian œconomy, to revive this ceremonial ordinance. But still we have the substance of this shadow, and ought to keep this feast, though not in a carnal man-

*Mic. ii. 10.

ner: for a prophet of the Jews* foretells the conversion of the Gentiles, in phrases which evidently import, that these joyful rites are figures of gospel-worship. The Christian joys, both in the present and future life, seem to have been prefigured by this Jewish festivity.

It began soon after the sorrowful day of expiation, in which they afflicted their souls, and had a lively representation of the great atonement. Exactly so, the Christian joy treads upon the heel of godly sorrow; and it is the prerogative of the high and lofty One, to revive the spirit of the humble and the heart of the contrite one. The bloody death and meritorious sufferings of the great Sacrifice, is the source from whence it springs. It is strange, but certain, the sinner's unspeakable joy arises from the Saviour's unutterable wo. Well may they keep a feast of tabernacles, who have received the atonement by Jesus Christ: well may they shout for joy, whose iniquity is pardoned, whose transgression is covered, and to whom the Lord will not impute sin; for though he was angry with them, his anger is turned away.

And this solemn feast lasted eight days, the Christian's joy is not like the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment: for it should be perpetuated through the whole course of his life. "Rejoice ev-

* Zech. xiv. 16. "And it shall come to pass, that every "one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusa-"lem, shall even go up from year to year, to worship the King, "the Lord of host, and to keep the feast of tabernacles, &c.

"ermore,*" is a New-Testament precept perpetually obliging. There are times when carnal mirth may be very unseasonable, and highly improper; but what should forbid that joy in the Holy Ghost, which is the gladness of his nation, to be indulged at all times? It is a joy that may exist in the same soul, together with the most unfeigned sorrow, and most lively contrition. It may even comport with the most afflicted state in this world, and abound in the greatest of tribulations. It is a continual feast, which the unparallelled afflictions of Paul were not capable of interrupting. Job could say, "Blessed "be the name of the Lord,†" in the most complicated distress. And "though the fig-tree should not "blossom, though fruit should not be found in the "vines, though the labour of the olive should fail, "though the flock should be cut off from the fold, "and there should be no herd in the stalls;" it was the firm resolution of Habakkuk, "Yet will I re-"joice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of my "salvation.‡"

However, it must be owned, the feast is kept here but imperfectly. We are in heaviness through manifold temptations, and must not expect to have all tears wiped away in a place of sin and sorrow.—The principal celebration of this festival is in heaven, where alone there is fulness of pure unmixed joy. In comparison of this blessed state, how imperfect is the present! It may be resembled to the

* 1 Thess. v. 16. † Job i. 21. ‡ Hab. iii. 17, 18.

sorrowful day of expiation, that preceded this joyful feast. But as the Jews of old, for one day of sorrow had eight days of gladness, so momentary affliction shall there give place to everlasting joy.—The beloved apostle describes the heavenly state in allusion to the ceremonies of this feast: "And I "beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man "could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and "people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and "before the Lamb, clothed with white robes.*"—And as the Jews were wont at the feast of tabernacles, they had palms in their hand, and sung with a loud voice the great Hosannah.

SECONDLY, THE FAST OF ANNIVERSARY ATONEMENT.

UPON the tenth day of the seventh month, (a month distinguished in the Jewish rubric for the great number of festivals observed in it,) the whole body of the people of Israel were required to keep a solemn fast to afflict their souls for sin, and to abstain from all manner of servile work. But the chief solemnities of the day consisted in those rites by which the high priest was to make atonement for the sins of his nation; which rites were never practised but upon this occasion. Whatever our great High Priest has done for the salvation of his people in earth beneath, or in heaven above, was prefigured in these venerable solemnities.

* Rev. vii. 7.

This the inspired writer to the Hebrews having at length illustrated to our hand, it will not be necessary to enlarge upon it. Let it suffice briefly to enumerate the sacerdotal actions reserved for this memorable day, and then to hint at their typical sense.

How then was the Jewish high priest to equip himself for the service of the day? He was to put on his holy linen garments after washing himself. He was to furnish himself with a bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, to be offered for his own sins, and the sins of his family. He was also to take of the congregation two kids of the goats for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. One of the goats was to be offered unto the Lord after the manner of a sin-offering; the other presented alive before the Lord, and then dismissed into the wilderness. The sacrifices being prepared, he proceeded in the following manner. First, he killed the bullock, to atone for himself and family; and taking in his hand a censer full of burning coals from off the altar, and a quantity of sweat incense suffient to raise a cloud that should cover the mercy-seat, taking also the blood of his bullock in a vessel, he went into the sanctuary, set the incense on fire, and sprinkled the blood upon and before the mercy-seat. The sacrifice for himself being thus performed, he returns out of the sanctuary, and kills the goat of the sin-offering for the people; and bringing his blood again within the vail, he sprinkles it, as he had done with the blood of the bullock, upon the

mercy-seat, and likewise upon the golden altar.—"And," said the lawgiver of the Jews, "there shall "be no man in the tabernacle, when he goeth in to "make an atonement in the holy place, until he come "out."* The next ceremony is this: he brings the live-goat, and laying his hands upon the head of the creature, confesses over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, putting them upon the head of the goat, and sends him by some fit man into the wilderness; "And the goat," said the Lord, "shall "bear upon him all the iniquities of the children of "Israel, into a land not inhabited."† This done, he goes into the tabernacle of the congregation, and stripping himself of his linen garments, he deposits them in the holy place, washes himself, puts on his golden garments for glory and beauty, comes forth to the people, and offers the two rams for a burnt-offering, the one for himself, and the other for the people. Lastly, the fat of the sin-offering is burnt upon the alter, and the bodies of the bullock and goat, whose blood had been carried into the holy place, were burned without the camp.

Such is the order of the holy rites to be practised on this great anniversary; and the happy effects of it are said to be a *cleansing from all their sins*‡.—Now, it is evident these carnal ordinances have many marks of weakness and imperfection. If we speak of real atonement, it was utterly impossible that the blood of these bullocks and goats could take

* Lev. xvi. 17. † Ver. 22. ‡ Ver. 30.

sin away as pertaining to the conscience. They were but brute creatures, of inferior nature to the priest that offered them, and to the people for whom they were offered. They were offered by a sinful man, who needed atonement for himself. They were offered year by year continually, and in them a remembrance was again made of sin every year. Now, if they could have made the comers to them perfect, would they not have ceased to be offered? Most certainly they would: because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sin. In all these things the Priest of our profession has the pre-eminence. He needed not, like Aaron and his successors, to offer for himself, being harmless and undefiled. He needed not to shed the blood of others; for he was able to offer up himself. He needed not repeat his sacrifice oftener than once, or suffer often from the foundation of the world: for by one offering he hath for ever perfected all them that are sanctified. These necessary allowances being made, of the vast disparity between the type and Jesus Christ, we shall proceed to enumerate some of these grand evangelical mysteries that were enigmatically preached unto the Jews in the transactions of this day.

That in future time a true and proper atonement should be made for the sins of Israel; or, to use the stile of the prophet Zechariah, that "God "would remove the iniquity of his land in one day:"*

* Zech. iii. 9.

this seems to have been the leading doctrine held forth in all the sacrifices, but especially in those that were offered on this occasion. Yet a little while, and God will exhibit a propitiation in the promised Messiah, who shall finish transgression, and make an end of sin, and perfectly do that will of God, which cannot be done by sacrifice for sin, and burnt-offerings. And how shall this great event be brought to pass? How shall the Messias redeem Israel from all his iniquities. What shall he do? What shall be done unto him? How shall he begin? and in what manner shall he finish the arduous work? These questions may all be answered by these anniversary rites.

It was signified, that the great Maker of atonement should assume the nature of the persons for whom it should be made: for their high priest was one of their brethren, and taken from among men. That when he should come into the world, to do the will of God, he should not make a splendid figure, nor array himself of all that glory of which he is truly possessed. For the high priest of the Jews, upon the day of atonement, put not on at the first his best suit of apparel, but was content with the holy linen garments he wore in common with other priests.—That he should be constituted a public person, and represent a great number of individuals, in whatever should be done by him. For the high priest did not officiate in the garments which he commonly wore, but in these public robes that were

the badges of his public character as the representative of the people.——That the sins of all the redeemed should be transferred upon him, and become his own by legal imputation. For all the iniquities of the children of Israel were solemnly confessed over the head of the scape-goat, before he was dismissed into the wilderness.——That when thus charged with guilt, he should suffer the punishment of death, and his life be violently taken away. For the other goat, the bullock, and two rams, were killed for sin-offerings and burnt-offerings.—And "without shedding of blood was no remission.*" That the blood of Jesus should be shed in a public manner without the gate. For the bodies of these beasts were burned without the camp.——That he should, however, live, even when dead, as to his divine nature, and be a glorious conqueror of the grave by his resurrection. For the scape-goat, which was the half of the sin-offering for the people, was not to be killed as the other goat.——That he should, when the work of purging our sins was finished, disappear on earth, enter within the vail of these aspectable heavens, into that happy place where God resides among the blessed angels. For when the high priest had shed the blood of the bullock and the goat, he went out of the sight of the Israelites, entering within the vail, into that venerable apartment, where were the symbols of the divine presence, and where JEHOVAH sat enthroned be-

* Heb. ix. 22.

tween the cherubims.——That his most precious blood should be the key to open the everlasting gates, or should procure his welcome reception into the presence of God, For unless the high priest had offered up the appointed victims, he durst not have presumed to see the face of God in the most holy place.——That though the heavens should contain him, and the world see him no more, he should still be carrying on his priestly work in the presence of JEHOVAH. For when the Jewish priest entered within the vail, he perfumed the mercy-seat with incense, and sprinkled it with blood. Truly unless the high priest had gone into the holiest of all with his blood and incense, he had not discharged the most glorious part of his work. If he had only offered the victims, and gone no further than the middle court, the inferior priests had been upon a level with him; for these things they did as well as he. So if Jesus Christ were still on earth, where he offered up himself; if he had not gone to the Father, and retired from the view of men, he could not be a priest in the most eminent sense of the word, the most glorious part of his function were still to be discharged, and the resemblance betwixt him and the Jewish high priest would be very lame and imperfect. But rejoice, O ye that believe on his name, and ye who make his atonement the principal basis of your comfort; for we have a great High Priest, that was once on earth, but is now passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. There

he appears as a Lamb as it had been slain, and stands with his golden censer, to offer up the incense of his intercession with the prayers of all saints. A time will come, when the interposing vail shall be drawn aside, and the great High Priest return, with sound of trumpet, to bless his expecting people, and absolve them from all their iniquities before an assembled world: for "to them that "look for him, he shall appear the second time "without sin, unto salvation."

THIRDLY, THE FEAST OF FIRST-FRUITS AND OF PENTECOST.

AS it was the will of God, that his people should dwell alone, and be divided from all nations of the world by a wall of partition, till the Messias should come to pull it down; so, besides a great number of other peculiarities, they must not plough, nor sow, nor reap, in the same manner as other people. The rites with which they began and finished their harvest, are not unworthy of particular notice. Besides the charitable regulation they observed, in not making a clean riddance of the corners of their field, nor gathering any gleanings, nor returning to fetch a forgotten sheaf (for these were the perquisites of the poor stranger, the fatherless, and the widow): they were commanded to begin their harvest with offering to the Lord a sheaf of the first-fruits, and to end it in a holy convocation, and an offering of two loaves, with other solemnities;

The beginning of harvest in the holy land, was on the morrow after the feast of the passover, when they presented their first-fruits unto the Lord, not only for the whole congregation, but, as it would seem, for every particular family. The form of words to be pronounced on this occasion by him that offered the first-fruits, is expressly recorded in the Jewish law;* and the wise king of Israel inforces the obedience of this religious precept with the assurance of the heavenly benediction: "Honour the Lord "with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of thine "increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, "and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."† They were forbid to taste themselves the produce of the year, whether bread, parched corn, or green ears, till they had brought the appointed offering to their God, as an acknowledgement of his dominion, and expression of their gratitude. It seems to have been a significant ceremony, intended to revive that law of nature, that the all-bounteous Giver should be honoured with our first and best. And truly, the observance of this rule is not only injoined every where in the Mosaic ritual, but may be traced as high as the offering of the first martyr, who brought unto the Lord of the firstlings of his flock: whereas no such thing is observed of the first murderer, to

* Deut. xxvi. 3. 5. "I profess this day, that I am come into "the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to "give us. A Syrian ready to perish was my father &c."

† Prov. iii. 9. 10.

whose offering the Lord had no respect. Besides, when he who crowned the year with his goodness, required a sheaf to be given him, it might impress upon their minds such momentous truths as these, that we can give nothing to God but what we first received from God; that what we present unto God, cannot be profitable unto him; and that what he requires, is nothing to what he bestows. What is a single sheaf to all the treasures of the harvest? Would he not been a foolish Israelite, who should have regarded his puny sheaf as an equivalent or price that deserved at God's hand the rich productions of the year? Nor is it less absurd for any to imagine, that their most useful actions can deserve the gift of eternal life, that joyful harvest of light that is sown for the righteous, and of gladness that is sown for the upright in heart.

The end of harvest was upon the fiftieth day after it began. This day was solemnized with a religious assembling, and with abstaining from servile work. The husbandman had seen the fruits of his ground brought to maturity, and testified his gratitude by the sheaf which he offered with holy rites, upon the first day; and now he offers upon the fiftieth day, two large loaves of fine flour baken with leaven, which are also called *the first-fruits unto the Lord*,* and were a thank-offering, as well as the sheaf, to that good God who had reserved for them the appointed weeks of the harvest. On the beginning

* Lev. xxiii. 17.

of Pentecost, they offered with the sheaf a lamb without blemish for a burnt offering: but now their gratitude must rise in proportion to the favours they receive, and not one lamb, but seven lambs, one young bullock, and two rams, must smoke upon God's altar.

We are informed by the historian of the New Testament, that this fiftieth day coincided with the most remarkable event of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the first founders of Christianity.—"When the days of Pentecost were fully come, "they were all with one accord in one place: and "suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a "rushing mighty wind: and there appeared unto "them cloven tongues, as of fire, and sat upon each "of them; and they were all filled with the Holy "Ghost, and began to speak with tongues, as the "Spirit gave them utterance."* By inspecting the history of the Israelites march from Egypt, it will also be found, that upon this very day the law was given at mount Sinai. The conjunction of these two grand events on the last day of the Pentecost, seems not without some special intention in the Holy Ghost. Fifty days after the deliverance from Egypt, was the killing letter, or the fiery law given; and fifty days after the resurrection of Christ, our better deliverance, was the quickening Spirit dispensed, to write the law not on hard tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of the heart, and to

* Acts. ii. 1. 2. 3. 4.

qualify the apostles to begin a new harvest, far more important than what was now happily finished; a harvest not of corn, but of men, to be reaped by putting the sickle of the word of God into the field of the world.

Such were the sacred rites with which the Jews began and finished their harvest; and, in the language of the New-Testament, whatever thing is the beginning, pledge, and earnest of more of the same kind, is stiled first-fruits. So the first-fruits of Achaia* denotes the most early converts to the Christian faith in that part of the world; and those begun graces and consolations of the Holy Ghost, that are the earnest of the eternal inheritance, are denominated *the first-fruits of the Spirit*. But we shall chiefly observe the application of this epithet to Christ, and to believers.

"CHRIST," says the inspired apostle, "is risen "from the dead, and become the first-fruits of "them that sleep.‡" May we not hence affirm, that as the harvest is a natural emblem of the end of the world, and general resurrection; so the Jewish first-fruits did represent the resurrection of the Son of God. The bodies of the saints, when deposited in the grave, may be compared to that seed which the husbandman commits to the furrows of the field. One would imagine, that the grain once buried under the clod, would never more emerge from under it. But

* 1 Cor. xvi. 15. † Rom. viii. 23. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 20.

constant experience assures us, that by the combined influence of vernal showers and suns, it will burst the confinement of the furrow, and reward the labourer's toil with copious fruit. So, at the destined hour, the sleeping dust of saints shall revive as the corn; the earth shall cast forth her dead, and shall no more cover her slain; and what was sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory. The resurrection of the corn is an event in the world of nature that clearly proves the possibility of God's raising the dead. The resurrection of Jesus Christ advances further still, and evidently proves the certainty of our bodies arising from the dust. This joyful event not only proclaims in loudest accents, that the dry bones can live, if it is the pleasure of God to send forth his quickening Spirit; but asserts, in the strongest manner, that "he will "revive us, he will raise us up, and we shall live in "his sight:"* Were the first-fruits reaped before the rest of the harvest? So Christ the first-fruits was first raised from the grave, and afterwards they that are Christ's shall be raised at his coming. Were the first-fruits a pledge and earnest to the Israelites, that the whole harvest should be reaped in due time? The resurrection of Jesus Christ insures the resurrection of all his people at the appointed season. So runs the joyful declaration in the prophet, "Thy dead shall live, together with my dead body "shall they rise: awake & sing, ye that dwell in dust."†

* Hos. vi. 2. † Is. xxvi. 19.

But as the first-fruits are an emblem of Jesus Christ, they no less represent the faithful, and the redeemed from among men. "Israel," says a prophet, "was holiness to the Lord, and the first-fruits "of his increase."* And an apostle affirms, that, "of his own will we are begotten by the word of "truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his "creatures."† Let us see the resemblance. The first-fruits were the unalienable property of the God of Israel, with which it had been sacrilege to intermeddle. Even so, the redeemed are the portion of the Lord: they are not their own, and all who devour them shall offend. The first-fruits were given by God to the priests, as a part of their maintenance. This puts us in mind of that saying of our High Priest, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me."‡ The first-fruits were but a small part of the harvest. This may denote the paucity of saints, who, in comparison of the multitude, are like a handful of corn in the earth. But, lastly, as the first-fruits did sanctify and bless the whole crop, and in their use were better than the rest. Even so, the people of God, though few and small, are the excellent of the earth, and a blessing in the midst of the land, however much they may be undervalued by worldly men.

* Jer. ii. 3. † James i. 18. ‡ John xvii. 6.

FOURTHLY, THE FEAST OF THE NEW MOONS.

AS the feast of the New Moon is placed among the shadows of good things to come by the apostle of the Gentiles, we must not altogether pass over it. Though the beginning of the seventh month was peculiarly sacred, the beginnings of all the other months were also dedicated unto God, and solemnized with holy rites and exercises of devotion. On their new moons they refrained servile work, offered extraordinary sacrifices,* resorted to the prophets, feasted together, and blowed the silver trumpets. Let us try if we can assign the probable reasons of this service, or the moral instructions that may be learned from this statute unto Israel, and law of the God of Jacob.

And, first, Might it not be designed as an ascription of praise and thanksgiving to that glorious Being, who suspended that silver lamp in the blue vault of heaven, that it might smooth the shades of night with its cheerful borrowed rays, turn the ocean in its bed, divide our time, and serve the purposes of vegitation, as well as the golden ruler of

* The sacrifices for the new moon appointed in the Mosaic law, are two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs, &c. Lev. xxviii. 11. Ezekiel mentions but one young bullock, six lambs, and a ram, chap xlvi. 6 though the church-state which he describes, is supposed to be more glorious than the former one. We see from this, the ceremonial law was not designed to be unalterable: for not only the priesthood being changed, (which the apostle observes, Heb. vii. 12), but the sacrifice also being changed, (according to Ezekiel), there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

the day? They acknowledged, by this festival, that God who is above, was the prime mover of this, and other heavenly luminaries; that to him they were indebted for all the beneficial effects of these excellent creatures. Had they intended to address their homage to the host of heaven themselves, and not to him who formed them by the breath of his mouth, they would no doubt have rather blown their trumpets to the rising sun, or to the moon at her full, when she walks in brightness. But God, who is jealous of his glory, required that he should be praised for this good creature, not when she appears to her greatest advantage, but when she is either altogether invisible, or dimly seen, like an inconsiderable streak of light. By this precaution none can suspect, but the sacred rites were in honour of him who "made the sun to rule by day, and the "moon to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for "ever."*

Might it not also be intended as a solemn recognition, that God was the sole proprietor of their times, which are wholly in his hand, and ought to be dedicated unto his service? The first days of their month might be offered to God for the same reasons as the first-fruits of their ground. Hereby they disclaimed the superstition of the Heathen, who were dismayed at the signs of heaven, and esteemed some parcels of their time ill-fated or unlucky. As every creature of God is good; so no time is evil, being

* Psalm cxxxvi. 8. 9.

sanctified by the same word of God, and prayer. If the first-fruits be holy, so is the lump; and if the first day of every month be holy, the subsequent days are consecrated by it.

But chiefly, as one is apt to look for some notices of the Messiah in all the legal ordinances, might not this monthly festival, and especially the feast of trumpets in the seventh month of their civil, but first of their sacred year, be viewed by them as a faint shadow of the future renovation of all things by Jesus Christ? Though we must not be bold in fixing our own conjectures upon the Holy Ghost, as his undoubted meaning, there seems, however, to be a considerable likeness betwixt the blowing of the trumpet at the new moon, and the voice both of the gospel and the archangel.

First, It might perhaps be a figure of the new face the church should wear in the age of the Messiah. In other places the universal church is compared to the moon, and the preaching of the gospel is resembled to the blowing of a great trumpet.—What though we should consider the old moon as an emblem of the Jewish œconomy, which, like that waning orb, decayed, waxed old, and vanished away. But the Christian dispensation may be compared to the new moon, which, small at first, did gradually increase, while the sound of the gospel-trumpet, the voice of our great High Priest, did go into all the earth, and his words unto the end of the world. Who knows but the believing Jews might,

by this feast, express their faith and joy in that happy revolution, which the apostle calls, "the abolishing "in his flesh the enmity, even the law of command- "ments, contained in ordinances, to make in him- "self, of twain, one new man?"*

Or, lastly, May we not discern, in this monthly festival, a shadow of the awful transactions in the great and terrible day of the Lord; which shall, however, be a joyful period to all true Israelites, and the time of the restitution of all things? This visible world itself may be resembled to a waning moon, as the fashion of it passes away. But as the new moon succeeded the old, while the priests did blow with their trumpets; so when the last trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living shall be changed; this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Then shall that blessed state commence, when, according to the sublime prophet, "Thy sun, "O Zion, shall be no more thy light by day, neither "for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: "but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting "light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no "more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw "itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting "light, and the days of thy mourning shall be "ended."†

* Eph. ii. 15. † Isa. lx. 19. 20.

FIFTHLY, THE METAPHORICAL PRIESTHOOD OF ALL CHRISTIANS.

ALTHOUGH the Levitical priests were chiefly designed to prefigure the great High Priest, as has been said, this hinders not to view them also as emblems of all the saints, who, in every age, are caused to approach unto God, that they may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. It is true indeed, the great propitiatory sacrifice is already offered, never to be repeated again; and we cannot sufficiently detest that sacrilegious usurpation of the Redeemer's glory, by the pretended priests in the Roman church, who, without any the least warrant from the sacred oracles, give out to their deluded votaries, that they offer in the mass, I know not what unbloody sacrifice, for the sins of the living and the dead. O impiety! O absurdity! for can any thing be more wicked and foolish, than to imagine that Jesus Christ has not, by his one offering, for ever perfected all them that are sanctified, but left his work to be completed by a wretched, mumbling, mortal priest? We Christians must acknowledge, that all priesthood, in the strict literal sense, is now ceased in Christ the end of the law. But still there is a metaphorical priesthood, which the New-Testament ascribes, not to the office-bearers in the Christian church, but to all Christians without exception. It was the promise of God to his ancient people, that "they should be unto him a kingdom of

"priests;*" and the phrase is adopted by a New-Testament apostle, who says, to the whole body of the believers to whom he wrote, "Ye are a royal "priesthood.†" It was foretold by the holy prophets, that men should call the professors of the true religion, *the priests of the Lord*, and *the ministers of our God*‡;—that the Gentiles should be taken for priests and Levites;—that the priestly tribe should have an offspring numerous as the host of heaven, and the sand of the sea;—that in every place which the rising and setting sun surveys, incense and a pure offering should be offered to the true God.—These great and precious promises have already been, and still more shall be fulfilled. The company of the redeemed were seen by John in vision arrayed in white robes, the badge of their priestly character: and he heard their heavenly song of praise to that loving Saviour that washed them from their sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God. Though the analogy of the legal and metaphorical priesthood may not perhaps be so striking as betwixt Aaron and Christ Jesus, there is not wanting a considerable resemblance.

Were the Levitical priests chosen by God, and separated to his peculiar service? God hath chosen the faithful from the rest of mankind, and set apart him that is godly for himself. Were they taken in the room of the first-born of all the tribes, to whom the right of priesthood seems to have originally be-

* Exod. xix. 6. † 1 Pet. ii. 9. ‡ Isa. lxi. 6.

longed? The people of Christ are the general assembly and church of the first-born, as all God's children are. Were they all descended from Aaron and Levi? (for unless they could prove their genealogy, they were put from the priesthood as polluted.) So all the saints are descendents from Jesus Christ, their everlasting Father, and ought to ascertain their heavenly extraction by the documents of a holy conversation. They were washed with water at their consecration, and were always to use the great laver that stood in the entry of the tabernacle, when they ministred in the sanctuary. This puts us in mind of the washing of regeneration that all Christians partake at first, and of the frequent recourse to the fountain of Christ's blood in their holy service. The oil that anointed them, signified the unction of the Spirit, which the faithful receive from the holy One. The white garments of fine linen, are an emblem of the righteousness of the saints. They were not allowed a share of the earthly Canaan, as the other tribes; for the Lord spake unto Aaron, "Thou "shalt have no inheritance in their land, nor have "any part among them: I am thy part, and thine "inheritance.*" Was not this a lively type of the superior privilege of his beloved, who are delivered from the men of the world, who have their wretched portion in this transitory life? But the Lord is their portion, and therefore in him they may hope, be their outward state ever so indigent.

* Numb. xviii. 20.

The ceremonial purity required of them that bore the vessels of the Lord, denotes, that holiness becomes the house of the Lord for ever, and all who worship in his temple.

But what are their sacrifices? Let an apostle speak this: they are "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*" Perhaps we might say, to use the legal stile, there is the meat-offering of charitable distributions; the drink-offering of penitent tears issuing from a broken contrite heart; the heave-offering of prayer and elevated desires; the peace-offering of praise and thanksgiving; and the whole burnt-offering of the whole man, when the body is presented unto God a living sacrifice, when every lust is mortified, and the very life surrendered for the honour of God in martyrdom, which sometimes is a reasonable service. These are the sacrifices which all the saints should offer, not to an unatoned, but to an atoned God. They themselves are their temples; and, besides, they have access by faith into heaven, the holiest of all. Christ is their altar, that sanctifies all their gifts. His Spirit is the fire that inflames, and his merit is the salt that powders all their sacrifices, when they come with acceptance before the presence of JEHOVAH.

* 1 Pet. ii. 5.

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